



# The PENNANT

A PUBLICATION OF THE PEN COLLECTORS OF AMERICA, INC.

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*The Inkmakers  
Diamond Dreams  
Handwriting Analysis  
Opening a Time Capsule*

The Parker Pen Company  
 Flexible  
 Ag





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## TECHNOLOGY YOU CAN DEPEND ON

**U**NLESS YOU LIVE FAIRLY CLOSE BY, GETTING TO A PEN SHOW CAN BE A HIGH-TECH ORDEAL—ER, ADVENTURE—these days. Not long ago, I was packed and ready to go when my #2 son, who lives near the airport, reminded me that the commuter freeway was closing at midnight Thursday. My plane left at 6 a.m. Friday. That meant it would be worse than impossible to take my usual route to the airport, even at 4 a.m., because not only would the usual traffic be on it, but so would all the traffic normally carried on the commuter road. “It’s gonna suck, Mom,” he warned.

His girlfriend searched MapQuest (an Internet mapping site) for a surface-street route to take and my #3 son, who was visiting, and I went over it. Piece of cake, we figured.

Within two miles of home and enjoying sparse traffic, we ran into a “Road Closed” sign. Being a kid who colors outside the lines, #3 son circumvented the barrier and we tooled along a few more blocks until we discovered that not only was the road closed, but it ended. MapQuest had not indicated this.

We muddled around a while and found another way to get to the airport, but of course we were late and I had to rush to get to the security line ... which extended four times the length of the building, a situation I hadn’t seen since 9/11.

Eventually, I triumphed over security and made it to my gate with about seven minutes to spare. I heaved a sigh of relief, bought a cup of chai, and sat down to people-watch before loading. Just as I settled in, the universally dreaded Garbled Voice spluttered over the intercom. I tried to listen, then asked the person next to me, “Did I hear right? Did they just say the flight’s been delayed?”

“Yes,” she sighed. “They’ve been saying that for half an hour now.”

They continued to announce this disaster periodically for another 45 minutes. Then, one of the maintenance supervisors, trailed by the scent of rain, hustled in and took about 16 minutes to tell us that most likely the flight would be canceled. “The crews have been working on it all night, and the day crew’s working on it now,” he assured us. “One of the toilets isn’t working and they’re having trouble figuring out why.”

I burst into laughter—it was probably a measure of the rest of the crowd’s mood that no one else did. A toilet! On an airplane! That they couldn’t figure out! Good grief. Stumped by a toilet! Half an hour later—a long time after the plane should have taken off—the man returned. “We’re going to try to re-route you,” he promised. “We just can’t get that thing to work. But it is summer, and it is Seattle, so please be very patient.”

People moved instantly, a la “Star Trek,” from their seats to lines, sucking wind through the terminal with the speed of their passing. Another 40 minutes after that, I reached the desk and was told that my options were to go to another airline that had a flight that took off at—oops! Twelve minutes ago!—or they could fly me to San Diego, then to Chicago, then to Atlanta, and I’d get where I needed to go . . . around four Sunday morning.

“Not much point in that,” I grumbled.

“The best thing for you is probably to wait. There’s still a chance that they might get it fixed. Maybe.”

I called #3 son and advised him he might need to come back and pick me up. “We’ll go to the zoo, or the Experience Music Project,” I improvised.

“Sure, Mom, whatever,” he replied.

Fortunately, I’d taken a good book along. Two hours later, the maintenance guy came running back in, beaming like a lighthouse in a storm. “We fixed it! We fixed it!” he crowed. “We’re boarding immediately!”

Whisked onto the plane, we all sighed with relief and settled in for the trip. I called the friend who was supposed to pick me up and advised him I’d be late. It wasn’t a good thing, but he thought he could make it.

On the plane, the earphone jacks on my seat row didn’t work. Didn’t matter to me, but the other two folks wanted to watch the movie. One of them kept calling the attendant to try different headphones, hoping one set or another would eventually work. I wished the headphones were edible, because this flight had zero comestibles, not even the usual pretzels or a buy-it-here box lunch.

Upon landing, I hurried off to meet my friend (after calling him on a pay phone—which was not easy to find—since my cell phone refused to work), we scuttled off to his car, and headed for the hotel. We entered the line to pay for and get out of the parking lot and waited. . . and waited. . . and switched to another line...and waited... and waited. . .

I’ll spare you the gory details on this one, but we managed to snag one of two lines on which

**More >>> 32**





# FROM OUR PEN PALS

## IS THIS THE RIGHT BOX?

I read with great interest the article about pen boxes in the Fall 2007 issue, written by Bruce Speary. "Is This the Right Box?" was welcomed by me, and I'm sure many other collectors, as an important topic for vintage pen collecting. I must, however, point out one statement that is in error.

On page 35 is a photograph of four Parker Pen boxes. The bottom box states on the cover "The Parker Self-Filling Fountain Pen." In the text, the box is identified as for the "Click" filler from about 1905. The box is actually from the early-to-mid 1910s and is the box for the infrequently encountered slip-cap button filler models.

For a little more detail on this point, the box actually is a contemporary of the two boxes above shown above it, the "Jack Knife Safety" box and the "Safety Sealed Self-Filling" boxes. During the 1910s, Parker sold two different styles of self-filling pens in addition to the traditional eyedropper filled models. The "new and exciting" models were the "Jack Knife Safety" pens, whos cap design was patented in 1912 (applied for in 1909 as stated by Mr. Speary). While Parker was selling their new safety pen, it also sold self-filling models that were using the "older" style slip-cap design. These were a hybrid of sorts, a combination of the traditional eyedropper-fill cap design fitted with a self-filling mechanism—a button filler. These pens could not be sold as safety pens as they were most certainly not based on their cap design. They could however be sold as self-filling and an improvement over the eyedropper filled design.

Thanks again for this important article.

*John Danza*

## THE FLEXIBLE NIB

I'm writing to applaud the excellent article by Daniel Waitzman in the Fall 2007 issue, particularly the paragraph in which he depores the disappearance from modern pens of truly flexible nibs. The so-called flexible nibs offered in some new pens don't approach the lovely flexibility of nibs in several makes of vintage pens. Flexible nibs have long been my favorite and I have managed to acquire several only after many years of hunting and, sometimes, at great expense.

I look forward to reading more of Waitzman's articles—perhaps on the inadequacy of modern cartridges which have almost completely replaced the now old-fashioned but reliable lever fillers.

*William Walden*



# The PENNANT



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## ON THE COVERS

Front cover. Parker "51" set. Photo by Terry Clark.

Back cover. Eversharp adjustable nib.

Photo by Terry Clark.



# Diamond

by Marc Kolber, edited by David Moak

## Part II: Personal and business

### A new product

SEEKING A NEW PRODUCT FOR THE UPCOMING selling season, Aaron Kolber decided to focus on increasing sales of the mechanical pencil, a product that since its introduction had not sold especially well. Diamond Point started producing a matching pen and pencil set using a new symmetrical-patterned celluloid material. It was offered in two distinctive colors plus the always-available black. They packaged the matching set in a beautiful metal-framed plush gift box. The inside of the box was velvet lined with a spring lock cover. The gold fittings on the pen and pencil set, together with the gold finish on the frame of the box, complimented each other, making the overall presentation pleasing to the eye. Salesmen reported a demand for these Diamond Point sets immediately after the display of the initial shipments. Their instant success rewarded Diamond Point with additional "Special Sale" counter space.

Following the success Diamond Point scored with its first pen and pencil set, the company produced a second-generation edition. It featured a new, handsomely patterned celluloid manufactured by Dupont. Refinements in body shape and decorative accessories gave a distinctive identity to this new design. Diamond Point also updated the gift box, making the set even more attractive. They learned from experience that the method of presentation was most important, particularly when used as an award or gift. For that reason a similar box was designed and made available for any individual writing unit in the line.

### Diversification

Awards and premiums became a growing outlet for Diamond Point products. Kolber gave a great deal of thought to the idea of manufacturing products other than writing instruments that remained

within the scope of the company's manufacturing abilities. He was satisfied that Diamond Point had all the needed essentials and a sales force with the abilities, experience and contacts to handle most any kindred product.

The first such product introduced was a cigarette lighter. He formed a new corporation named the "Match-less Lighter Co." Before investing too much money and time, they assembled and packaged a sample run of lighters. Unfortunately, the response to the new product did not warrant going forward with this idea.

Seeking another outside product for the new selling season, Kolber decided to begin making desk sets. He concentrated on the individual parts first. After several attempts, he produced a desk pen that pleased him. It had a tapered body, with good balance, comfortable to the hand when writing. He also made a matching funnel. Next was the swivel. An original design was required because the "Big Four" pen companies controlled a subsidiary called "The Desk Set





# Dreams

## beginnings



Company” that controlled all of their patents. Rather than develop an entirely new design, which would have been very difficult given the patents that the large firms controlled, Diamond Point applied for and received a license under which they were to pay a royalty to the Desk Set Company for each unit sold. Last and most important was the base. The material used had to meet some very important prerequisites. After trying many possibilities, his choice was mirror glass. It best met the need of appearance, manufacturing ability, weight and cost.

With the components finally ready, they were assembled into a very attractive desk set. It met with instant approval

upon initial showing to all of the salesmen. They agreed that no test marketing was necessary before placing them in the line for the new season. All believed they had a hit. If successful, this could be a first for making something other than pocket pens and pencils. In fact, at that time they could not realize that it was the beginning of a new venture that would long outlive their original business. Eventually, they became the world’s largest producer in the field.

At this point, Charles Flaum asked that the other partners make a satisfactory arrangement to buy his share of the business. The transaction left Morris Kolber with two-thirds ownership. Mr. Flaum started his second retirement.

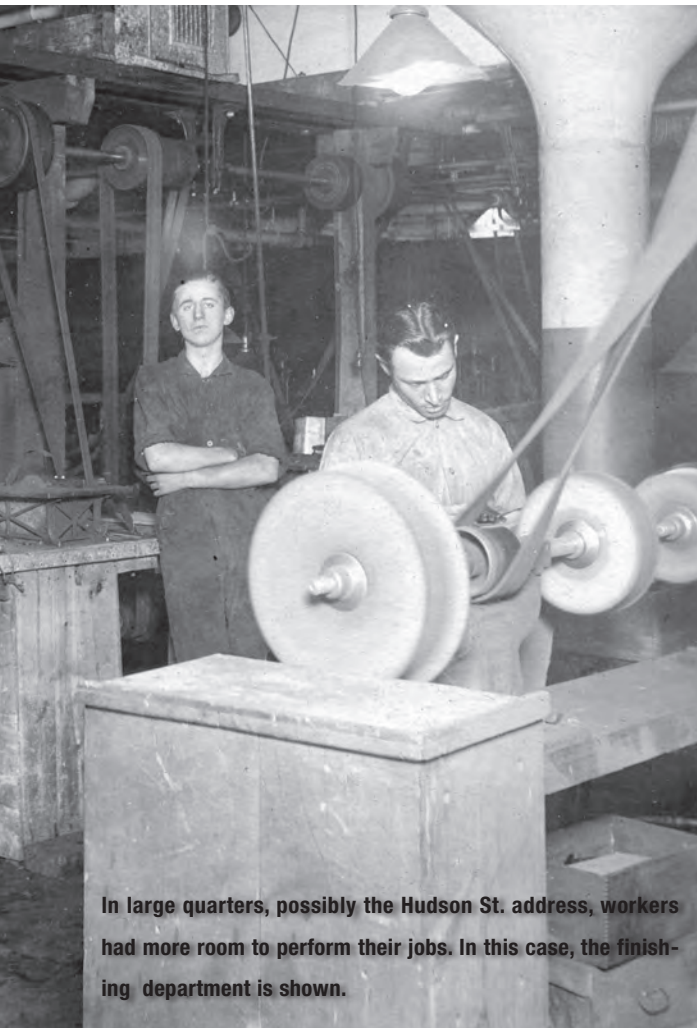
Kolber gave much attention to finding a new and possibly untapped market for Diamond Point products. Several large public corporations requested information as to the firm’s ability to supply them with its products in sizeable quantities. These companies were not connected in any way to the stationery field. Kolber requested salesmen on the road to fill in any free time by making appointments to meet appropriate buyers at large corporations in their territories. As a result of these contacts, Diamond Point received some lucrative orders.

For this season, about 1928, Kolber created another pen desk set. The base was jet-black polished glass  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” thick measuring approximately 2” by  $3\frac{1}{4}$ ”. A chrome-plated metal housing completely encased the base’s four tapered sides. A stamping operation followed which removed over seventy-five percent of excess material from the chrome-plated top. All that remained was a graceful sculptured configuration. Final assembly presented the jet-black glass covered in the chrome frame with the filigree design. A chrome plated swivel and black funnel and pen with chrome trim completed the functional product.

Also about 1928, Morris Neulander indicated he wanted to sell his portion of the partnership. As the only remaining member of the original trio, Kolber now owned 100% of the company. Surprisingly, the stock market crash of 1929 and the Depression of the 1930’s did not immediately diminish Diamond Point’s sales. During this adverse time the names of all sorts of pen companies were being bandied about as take over candidates. At that time 40 to 50 pen factories existed in New York City. Parts suppliers were spreading information to their customers. Rumors were traveling throughout the trade. You could not separate fact from fiction. It is more than possible that some of the larger firms were looking to expand and grow. During the following months several suitors presented Diamond Point with take-over propositions, some interesting, but all were rebuffed.

### Tragedy

One Monday morning Mr. Aaron, as he was called, arrived for work to a surprise reception. The workmen were all standing around looking at a gaping hole chopped out of the interior wall of the building. Burglars had gained access to the Diamond Point loft



In large quarters, possibly the Hudson St. address, workers had more room to perform their jobs. In this case, the finishing department is shown.



through that hole thereby avoiding all alarms. They spent the weekend breaking into the factory and searching out everything they could find of value. They broke into a specially built safe, the interior of which had many shelves, drawers, and compartments each having a specific purpose in the gold shop. The safe contained raw materials for gold processing, gold in process, raw gold, and finished goods including points, levers, and clips. They rifled through the tools and dies and other equipment kept on shelves and tables, making a complete mess of the shop. They then went into the offices and

*People suffered, doing without many of the necessities of life.*

*After almost three years of turmoil...The national elections of 1932 sent the Democratic candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the White House. In the short period ...known as Roosevelt's*

*"hundred days," the President and Congress worked harmoniously to enact fifteen major laws...that together returned government to functioning for the people again.*

created more havoc. The burglars emptied lockers and desks of their contents. Everything was on the floor. Diamond Point's managers recovered the papers and records that had been scattered about, but everything else of ready value was gone.

The employees accomplished nothing that day. The police were all over the place. Quickly formed clean-up crews tried to get everything back in place so people could get back to work. Fortunately the loss was insured. It proved to be a lesson for all, including the police and the insurance company.

### **Product Promotions**

Significant changes in marketing and management marked the start of 1930. Salesman Larry Robbins combined the concept of promotions, in which monies are advanced for cooperative advertising in newspapers, with the simultaneous presentation of outstanding in-store displays. The result met with such success that Kolber made Robbins the company's national sales manager. He had responsibility for overseeing the sales personnel, organizing or changing territories, and personally visiting major stores nationwide.

### **Financial Performance (1921-1931)**

As we've seen, Diamond Point launched operations in 1921-22 with an all-new management team in control. The first year the company sold little merchandise, so the startup-loss was expected. They made a small profit in each of the next three years (1923 through 1925) on a somewhat larger volume of sales and even accumulated some money to its capital account. The company ran "in the black" sooner than anyone had expected.

The unexpected departure of Nathaniel and JimWorth at the end of 1925 proved

most unfortunate. Instead of improving, the years 1927 and 1928 both saw nearly disastrous losses. Enter Mr. Larry Robbins. Mr. Kolber had full faith he would rise to the occasion and fill the void left by the loss of the Worths. In the years from 1929 to 1931, Mr. Robbins demonstrated leadership skills which improved the performance of all the sales staff. Booming sales brought the rewards expected earlier. Each year showed increases of over 20% and in 1931, sales topped \$500,000, setting a record. Despite the onset of the Depression this period thus ends on a high note of great success.

### **The Depression**

When 1932 rolled around, Diamond Point could credibly expect another favorable year. The salesmen on the road in February sent in orders to restock store shelves after excellent Christmas holiday sales.

The Depression that gripped the country since the stock market crash of 1929 had so far spared Diamond Point. Good fortune followed the company throughout this treacherous period and seemed ready to continue until the salesmen traveling their territories

in February noticed a drop in orders. Still, historically, this was the slow quarter of the year. They would have another chance in late spring and early summer to increase sales. Men went on the road for their most important pre-holiday selling season. The news was not good. Retail sales in the stores had fallen drastically. Management installed inventory controls, placing order limits on the buyers.

By year-end of 1932, business just wasn't there. The worst was yet to come. From 1933 to 1935, Diamond Point suffered losses that brought it down to the last rung. Morris Kolber put up his remaining assets to borrow money and finance what little production their orders called for. Had another year or two like these continued, they would have gone belly up. People suffered, doing without many of the necessities of life. After almost three years of turmoil many businesses called it quits. Fortunately, Diamond Point was still able to hold on.

The national elections of 1932 sent the Democratic Party candidate, Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the White House. He took office on March 4, 1933, setting to work to break out of the Depression. In the short period between March 9th and June 16th, known as Roosevelt's "hundred days," the President and Congress worked harmoniously to enact fifteen major laws. Each one covered a single emergency purpose that together returned government to functioning for the people again. This was Roosevelt's "New Deal."

The people in the street seemed happier. Households improved their situations. People began going back to work. Money for food and clothing was more plentiful. Retailers were once again busy selling their merchandise. People even went to a movie once in a while.

The country took heart, believing that the Roosevelt Administration would change things for the better. Time was of the essence. Help was needed now; not promises, but action as soon as possible. The attitude of people reflected an awareness of what was happening, as if their wishing would make it happen. This was the first sign of a possible change in the country's business affairs.

The Great Depression was on the way out. Many things were improving. The wheels of industry and government proceeded on the fast track toward an improved economy for all to share. Still, it took several years for those wheels to start turning at speed.

### **Marc Kolber continues the story**

One Monday morning in 1933 I showed up for work at Diamond Point. I had applied for a summer job before entering New York University School of Commerce in the fall. I had just about enough money to pay for the first year's tuition. The summer before, I had worked in a slipper factory as a shipping clerk and double needle sewing machine operator.

Mr. Kolber, my Dad, gave me this job working in the new field he had developed—desk sets. This was a different undertaking for Diamond Point, being another kindred product that would fit into their line of pens and pencils."

I was the assembler and a young lady I was to know well in the future, Rose Marotta, worked with me, finishing and packaging what I produced. They had some sets in production. One was a square, mirrored base, 4 1/2" in size, with a depression in the center to hold paper clips, rubber bands, etc. The other was a rectangular jet-black glass base measuring 3" x 4" and 3/4" thick. On each base we mounted a swivel and a funnel for a black, tapered desk pen. Rose Marotta and I were kept busy that summer keeping up with other work assigned us. Time went very fast. I was off to school, leaving Rose Marotta the job of breaking in a new partner.

The other Rose was my sister, Rose Kolber, the last member of the Kolber family to join the company. Two other members of the family lived at home but pursued other interests. Rose Kolber graduated from Maxwell Training College, and became a teacher in the New York City school system. After several years of teaching and after much deliberation, she decided that teaching was really not what she wanted to do. Morris Kolber listened to her talk of her dissatisfaction with teaching. He turned to her and asked what she would like to do. She told him to ask again after a few weeks. He told her immediately, that if

she chose to work in an office, Miss Hartwig was retiring from Diamond Point at the end of the year. Her job would be open but still Rose gave her father the same answer, "I will see."

One day, unannounced, she arrived at the office and sat down with the ladies, whom she knew well, speaking to them as if she were on a social visit to her father. He walked in on them, greeting her and continuing on with his duties. Finally she called for Mr. Kolber to join her. She told him she made this visit to see if she fit in with the other ladies and admitted she would like to take a position. He told her that she could start to learn Miss Hartwig's job and would fill it if she proved capable.

Meanwhile, at New York University, I was learning the subjects that most interested me: accounting, bookkeeping, law, and, most of all, economics. I was glad to get this year of schooling. I think I gained much knowledge that would assist me in later life.

What Diamond Point needed was a quality material for the desk pen bases that was readily available and attractive enough to be acceptable on any person's desk. Mr. Aaron Kolber sought the exactly right item. My Dad kept me apprised of his progress in finding a product suitable for his purpose. On occasion I traveled with him on weekends going to garage sales and flea markets. The Depression wasn't over, for many this was their way of supporting themselves. We met many interesting people with handcrafted products. Many ideas evolved in Mr. Kolber's mind from these excursions. He made appointments with owners of factories closed down for lack of business. He reviewed in his own mind what was happening and concluded he was right. Diamond Point had to come up with a new field of endeavor that created new business.

At the end of the school year, with money scarce, I finished my classes and went back to work for Diamond Point. The past year's research had brought a conclusion about desk pen bases that we both had reached. Onyx was the best product available. We wasted no time finding suppliers. Onyx and marble works companies did new construction and demolition jobs. Each had their


own "yard" full of slabs from their building projects and sites. We purchased pieces cut to our own specifications from these slabs. It was a new outlet for them and they welcomed the business.

We started with desk pen sets. Our original idea was to fabricate other accessories for the desk. We had seen such items at flea markets, all selling very well. We began experimenting with letter racks, rocker blotters, calendars, letter openers, and even bookends.

The foreman of one supplier approached us. He had two Russian men, just arrived in New York, who wanted to start an onyx shop. Mr. Malick and Mr. Jacolev were former stonecutters and polishers in Russia. We struck a deal. Diamond Point would pay for the machinery and keep title to it. They would work the plant and sell the onyx to us at prices agreed upon.

We bought second-hand machinery and had it delivered to a double size garage on a side street in the West Fifties in New York City. After installation, the factory started operations. We bought an old Lincoln car to make deliveries and pick-ups. Everything was progressing as planned.

To get started, they visited the dealers along the New York and New Jersey waterfronts to establish relations. They let everyone know that their business involved buying and selling quarried stone products, both old and new, from demolition of old buildings, churches, soda fountains, fireplaces, etc., plus newly-quarried slabs that were readily available at higher costs.

Such materials were most often 1 1/8" to 1 1/4" in thickness. J & M, as they named the company, processed the stone to 7/8" inch. They then finished it into pieces of the specific size ordered, giving new life to something very old. Many companies and jobbers tried to purchase the more desirable types and shades of stone. J & M joined that competition. 

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*Editor's note: In the next issue, we will continue the story of Diamond Point as related by Marc Kolber. This is the second installment of five.*

VINTAGE PENS WENT THROUGH STAGES OF PROTOTYPES TO MAKE them work and several models to streamline the manufacturing by combining or reducing the number of parts. During the process features were added to distinguish one model from others in the marketplace. Patent laws added an overarching effect to the entire process. The basic pen is very simple: a reservoir delivering ink through a feed to the nib. Hence, repairs always have something to do with how and when a pen is made. My most recent lesson on this subject has to do not with pens but with binoculars. A friend who is a bird watcher has many binoculars that he managed to drop and mess up the alignment of the lenses, not unlike what happens to a pen dropped on the nib. The process of aligning lenses is called collimation and I read up on the subject and, over a period of several weeks, made a collimation platform. Then I started to take these binoculars apart. Well, much to my surprise, these modern binoculars made during the past 15 years, some relatively inexpensive and others moderately expensive, no longer have any adjustment devices for the various lenses. If the adhesive bonds for the prism are broken because of the accident, I can re-attach it. But that is about all I can do. On the inexpensive ones, if the prism housings are distorted they cannot be repaired, although re-attaching the prism on the more expensive ones, allowed them to work well.

What is true for binoculars is equally true for modern pens and mechanically advanced ballpoint pens. In a disposable and obsolescence-oriented technology, products are made for replacement, not repair, whereas vintage pens, or for that matter, vintage binoculars, are made so repairs are possible. Following the first lesson in pen repair, to take apart a

bunch of junk pens first before working on complete pens, I followed the same lesson with

binoculars. And, like pens, the inexpensive binoculars are harder to take apart and easier to break. The mantra for opening up a pen is to take all possible precautions including soaking, cleaning and heat—and adding patience to each precaution. Even then, some will break. Breaking is much less likely in assembling a pen, because all the parts are now clean and it's much easier to judge the tolerances of the materials.

### Plastics, son, plastics

Plastics of all kinds such as hard rubber, celluloid, bakelite, casein and acrylic change and degrade over time. How and why they do this depends on their original formulation, curing time and manufacturing. A pen made with a minor flaw in the material, over time can develop a major crack. While plastics of all kinds are not equally sensitive to heat, humidity, ozone and UV radiation, all can react to one or more of these. Add to these factors the human body as a heat; grime; and biochemical source through such as saliva and sweat. Despite all of that, plastics are incredibly durable. And yet, it should come as no surprise that cracks, chips and breaks do occur. Consequently, opening up a pen is the single most critical procedure in pen repairs. Skip a step and something is likely to break. Do everything by the book and there is still a chance that something will break. Cracks happen. The problem for pen restoration is how to fix them. The following are some examples of these repairs.

The first is a Japanese Capella pen with a model name of “Benisu.” This is a maki-e style eyedropper with a signed barrel, probably made in the 1930s or later. The material and construction of the pen suggest that it was a mid-range priced pen and not one of the classic maki-es. The barrel is made from hard rubber with a tight and thin copper sleeve overlay. Then a bakelite overlay was installed on top of the copper sleeve. The overall visual effect is to project a deep, muted gold color through the bakelite wherever there was no design. The cap was made in the same way. In time,

the bakelite shrank and, because the copper sleeve had no give, it cracked the entire length of both the barrel and cap. The width of the cracks was slightly less than 1 mm, which meant that the copper sleeve needed to be cut down by 0.16 mm. Given that the copper sleeve is less than 0.3 mm thick, the lathe work needed to be precise with a highly polished cutter so as to avoid tearing the copper sleeve.

The cracks posed two problems: since bakelite is not a common pen material, I



Capella with crack



Capella repaired



Holland with broken section



didn't know if there is a solvent to dissolve it. As a result I used an adhesive. The other problem is that the crack was V shaped and once I had the bottom of the V attached, I needed to fill in the valley. I had cut the brass to allow the bakelite sleeve some wiggle room. When the adhesive attached the bottom of the V, a small amount also seeped through to attach the bakelite sleeve to the copper, giving the adhesive a broader base to hold on



Montblancs with cap cracks

to. The slightly loose fit between the two sleeves should allow the bakelite to shrink further and not stress the adhesive bond. After the adhesive had cured for several days, the valley of the V was filled with colored acrylic. On the cap, the crack went through part of the maki-e design and after working several weeks with gold leaf, gold flakes and lacquer, I couldn't get the colors to match. In the end, I left the crack through the design alone.


The next is a pair of Montblanc 252/254 pens from the 1950s with cracks through the middle of the caps. When I looked at the first, I thought the cap might have been stepped on, but the second one had a similar crack. It turns out that the cap clutch ring was tightly inserted into the middle of the cap with the fingers of the clutch extended down to the opening. When the acrylic shrank, the crack opened down the middle of the cap. Various acrylics began to show up in the 1940s to replace celluloid, then the material of choice for pens. Gun cotton used to make celluloids was in high demand to make explosives. In comparison to celluloids, acrylics have two problems: shrinking and, with some, scuffing and dulling of the surface. The solution for both was to add silicates (glass) to the formulation, although that made the material more brittle. Early Parker 61s are known for their tendency to crack, as are Montblancs from the later 1950s and late 1980s. Although it is not that hard to achieve balance between brittleness and shrinkage, as well as maintaining surface sheen, it does take a few years before these negative qualities show up.

The solvent for many acrylics is methylene chloride (MC) or acetone and both, like many other solvents, are quite toxic. Crack work involves using three to five drops of solvent and, in the interest of safety, I have an electric fan behind me blowing fumes away from my face. Just to be sure, I did confirm with several chemists if this was a sufficient safety precaution. On the 252, the crack squeezed together well and, using about 5 drops of MC, I squeezed the crack shut. After holding it for about 2 minutes, I used a clothes pin to maintain pressure. The guide for effective crack repair is to see if a welding ridge shows up as the dissolved material

is squeezed up from the crack. If no welding ridge shows, then it's either not enough solvent or the wrong solvent. The crack on the 254 would not close up completely. I went through the same procedure as the other pen, closing the crack as much as possible. Once the material has cured for two to three days, I go back and fill in what remains of the crack with a black acrylic fill. A few days later I will sand down the ridging on the cracks, smooth them out and polish the caps. I did consider removing the clutch, but it looked like I needed to cut out the clutch ring on the lathe and, lacking a replacement, I decided to work around it.

The third pen is a metal cased John Holland from the 1920s. The barrels on screw-on-cap metal pens almost always screw on to the section. The reason is because stamped threads on the outside of a thin metal tube work just as well on the inside of the tube. But metal on metal threads can be extremely tight and, in this pen, the barrel broke just below the threads. My repair was to reattach the threads on the barrel. First, I knocked out the nib and feed, and then knocked out the hard rubber section under the metal overlay. I then soaked the overlay and the broken threads in Liquid Wrench for several hours to take care of any corrosion. Finally, I heated the threads directly with a butane torch to remove that part of the pen. Following that, I made a collar for the inside of the broken threads and soldered the piece back in. I then soldered the collar and threads to the barrel and put the pen back together.

### Solvent better than adhesive

When possible, solvent repair on plastics is always preferable to using adhesives. An adhesive holds parts to it, while a solvent joins parts to themselves. In most cases, the material failure will occur at the weakest point; solvent repair actually strengthens the material at that location. Virgin cracks and breaks are wonderful to work on and the results are invisible. Older breaks are harder to work on because of contamination and the profiles of the break distort and no longer match perfectly. A break where there is an earlier repair using adhesive is the hardest of all to work on because it is necessary to get rid of all traces of the adhesive first. As well, solvents that dissolve adhesives will frequently remove some original material. Finally, solvent work and soldering as well, are both skills learned over time. Initial disasters become sloppy work and eventually a very rewarding activity. Have fun in your repairs. 

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Holland and Montblanc repaired



# HANDWRITING

## GRAPHO-LOGICAL ? A LOOK AT HANDWRITING ANALYSIS by KATE GLADSTONE

### The First of Two Parts: Graphology —Here, There, and Everywhere?

IN 2004, TO GREAT MEDIA FANFARE WITHIN AND BEYOND THE WRITING instrument world, Pilot Pen announced it had hired handwriting analyst Sheila Kurtz to fill a groundbreaking new corporate position: Chief Graphology Officer. In 2005, to no media notice whatsoever, Pilot discontinued this position and its use of graphology.

Why didn't Pilot continue something that sounds so useful, such a logical fit for (of all businesses) a pen company? According to Pilot's Vice President of Marketing, Robert Silverman: "Although we were amazed at many of the handwriting analyses our CGO [Chief Graphology Officer] conducted, we made a decision to move in a different direction." Pilot marketing representative Donna Melisi put it a bit differently: "The need for Pilot to discontinue our Chief Graphologist's employment was a result of cutbacks, nothing more." Sheila Kurtz's own view: "It was a publicity thing, trying to get attention for Pilot. They never meant it to last in the long term. The same thing was true when I worked with another pen company, Uniball." (Uniball has not responded to the author's inquiries.)

Within and beyond the world of pens, the endeavors of Kurtz and other graphologists have created some intriguing and far-flung business. On Kurtz's website, a roster of her current corporate clients reads like the headlines of the morning news: the Vatican, two sports teams (the New York Jets and the Utah Jazz), the Government of Puerto Rico, three pharmaceutical houses (Wyeth, Astra-Zeneca, and Pfizer—Kurtz's website abounds in pictures of the graphologist exhibiting at Pfizer corporate events), a sprinkling of smaller firms in various fields, and the Gannett newspaper/media company. Among the current listed clients, only one (Gannett) responded to the author's inquiries. Gannett's human resources head, Roxanne Horning, states Gannett has never used graphology and has never employed a graphologist. When asked about Gannett's statement, Kurtz explained that her web-site's mention of Gannett Media actually refers to graphology services she provides for the editor of a Delaware-based Gannett newspaper, which, for confidentiality reasons, she declined to name.

Graphologists follow many, often conflicting schools of thought. However, graphologists of every variety claim that each quirk of handwriting demonstrates something important about the character of the writer. Every stroke of your handwriting, graphologists say, shows something vital about you that your friends, your present or future employer, your present or future spouse (or you yourself) might well pay a graphologist to disclose. The following examples of graphological deductions based on handwriting appear in "Confessions of a (Former) Graphologist" (Tripician, 2000) an article written by a researcher who practiced as a professional graphologist from 1988 to 1996 before abandoning the field as a result of his increasing doubts about its validity and reliability. (Quotations by Tripician, 2000: illustrations by Gladstone after Tripician.)

Fig. 1. Tripician: "A lower-case letter 'a' which has an open top... is construed [by graphologists] as meaning that the subject cannot keep confidences and is overly talkative. No scientific validation of this meaning can be found."



Fig. 2. Tripician: "A capital letter 'I' with an arrow towards the left... is construed to mean, in one school of graphology, that the subject has ill feelings towards the mother figure. In another school of graphology, this form indicates ill feelings toward the father figure. Neither meaning has been validated and it is quite possible that both are incorrect."

Fig. 3. Tripician: "Ovals, i.e., lower-case letters 'a' and 'o' which have stabs in them...are construed to mean that the subject is sarcastic. This has not been validated in any known scientific study."



Fig. 4. Tripician: "...a lower-case letter 'p' which has a spike at the top...is construed to mean that the subject is argumentative. Now, a problem arises [notes Tripician] because both the Palmer and Mills handwriting systems, as taught earlier in this country, show this as a normal formation. In addition, most of the signers of the Declaration of Independence used this style. Therefore, are we to assume that anyone taught to make this formation will become argumentative? Also, are we to assume that the 18th century was populated with argumentative people? We doubt that either case is true."



In addition to Tripician's remarks, this author notes that almost nobody educated in the USA after the 1940s writes a spiked p. If argumentativeness puts a spike on your p (as graphologists claim), what accounts for the spikeless p's of millions of argumentative people now inhabiting the USA and other countries? Consider, for instance, the following sample (used with the writer's permission)

Fig. 5. Spikeless p's don't stop this writer from loving a good argument—as anyone will find out after five minutes in the same room. "At least," says the writer, "anyone will find this out except a gra-

please move  
your point

phologist. When I went to one, almost the first thing she said was ‘Your handwriting shows you don’t get into arguments.’ Immediately I answered ‘I do too get into arguments!’ But the graphologist just smiled and said: ‘That’s what you think, honey. But your handwriting tells me otherwise!’

In some European nations, graphology has gained vast public acceptance and use. For instance, 85 percent of employers in France require job applicants to provide a handwritten letter of application: with the understanding that this letter will go to a graphologist before the company decides to hire or reject the applicant. Reportedly, a few of the French graphologists quietly capitalize on this situation by offering two types of service—heavily promoted corporate consulting to weed out applicants whose handwriting tags them as unsuited to the employment available, side by side with much more discreetly advertised private sessions for oft-rejected job-hunters hoping to beat the system by changing their handwriting to something that will finally snag them that dream job. In the USA, according to the *Washington University Law Quarterly* (Spohn, 1997) some employers added graphology to their personnel selection and assessment processes because of laws forbidding use of other methods (such as the polygraph).

Even so, graphology has far from universal endorsement. In at least one European nation—the Netherlands—public acceptance and use of graphology have fallen over the past four decades from a previous high rate to nearly nil. During the 1950s, 75 percent of Dutch companies used graphology to evaluate personnel and applicants. However, during the next four decades the situation swiftly changed. First, in 1963 and 1973 two widely publicized research studies by psychologist Abraham Jansen failed to show more than chance levels of accuracy for graphology. Then, one by one, companies using graphology in the Netherlands either discontinued the practice or went out of business.

According to a report of this phenomenon in *Skeptical Odysseys* by Paul Kurtz (a study of the rise and fall of popularly accepted belief systems), by 1993 when statistician Jan Willem Nienhuys investigated the current use of graphology in the Netherlands, he found that only 118 companies—a mere 1.39 percent of the businesses surveyed—still obtained handwriting samples from applicants. Among these firms, only half actually used the samples for graphological evaluation. (The remaining companies used them for other purposes, such as simply ensuring that the applicant could read and write.) In the same year, researching four employment agencies that once required applicants to submit handwriting samples for graphological purposes, Nienhuys found that three had stopped doing so. (*Skeptical Odysseys*, p. 137.)

Nonetheless, graphologists remain in business worldwide, and some (like Kurtz) indeed thrive. On the Internet and through their

publications, these practitioners advertise that their scrutiny of character through handwriting can save money, time, and trouble for a business by providing an in-depth portrait of employees and job applicants. Besides offering their services to governments, non-profits, and the business world, graphologists have also marketed their profession to employment agencies (as part of the applicant evaluation process) as well as to the legal system. One well-known graphologist, Ruth Holmes, regularly works with Dr. Kevorkian’s attorney, and has done jury selection for the doctor’s several trials.

In one controversial example of employment-related use of graphology from the early 1990s, staff members of the Vancouver (British Columbia) school board secretly engaged a graphologist to analyze the handwritings of employees in an attempt to force the termination of anyone whose handwriting the graphologist identified as suggesting pedophilia. (To a graphologist, having “pedophiliac” handwriting does not mean that the person has ever actually committed such a crime. According to graphology, “pedophiliac” strokes found in a handwriting sample merely prove the person might someday commit pedophilia.) The graphologist claimed his method had 100 percent accuracy in separating out those who might commit pedophilia from those who never would. Because of public outcry, the Vancouver experiment with handwriting analysis did not last.

In addition to corporate work in personnel selection and other fields, graphologists also advertise to ordinary men and women who want to know what their handwriting (or that of an acquaintance, friend, neighbor, or family member) may reveal.

#### How Well Does It Work?

Graphologists often claim their methods equal or exceed the accuracy and reliability of the most sophisticated psychological testing, and frequently state that extensive research supports the use of graphology for psychological testing and similar purposes. In a plethora of websites and popular books for the public—and textbooks, videos, and correspondence courses for graphology students—graphologists assert they can discern the depths of someone’s character from a page or two of handwriting.

Of course, one may wonder just how accurately a graphologist may deal those who consciously change the way they write—whether in hopes to outwit a graphologist, or for more mundane reasons such as the desire for greater legibility, more comfort in writing, or higher speed. When the author asked graphologist Sheila Kurtz whether conscious handwriting change makes any difference to a graphologist’s evaluation, she replied: “No, because you cannot consciously change your handwriting. People absolutely cannot just sit down one day and decide to change how they write. It’s impossible.”

Claims “you cannot consciously change your handwriting” never fail to amuse one PCA member who enjoys pulling a scribal “fast one” on handwriting analysts. Explains the mischievous member—who, for obvious reasons, prefers anonymity—“I have enough knowledge of graphology to be able (with a little brushing up) to suit my writing to what I’d like the graphologist to say. Sometimes, pen stores around here will have a graphologist up for the day as a promotional thing. Once, I sat down

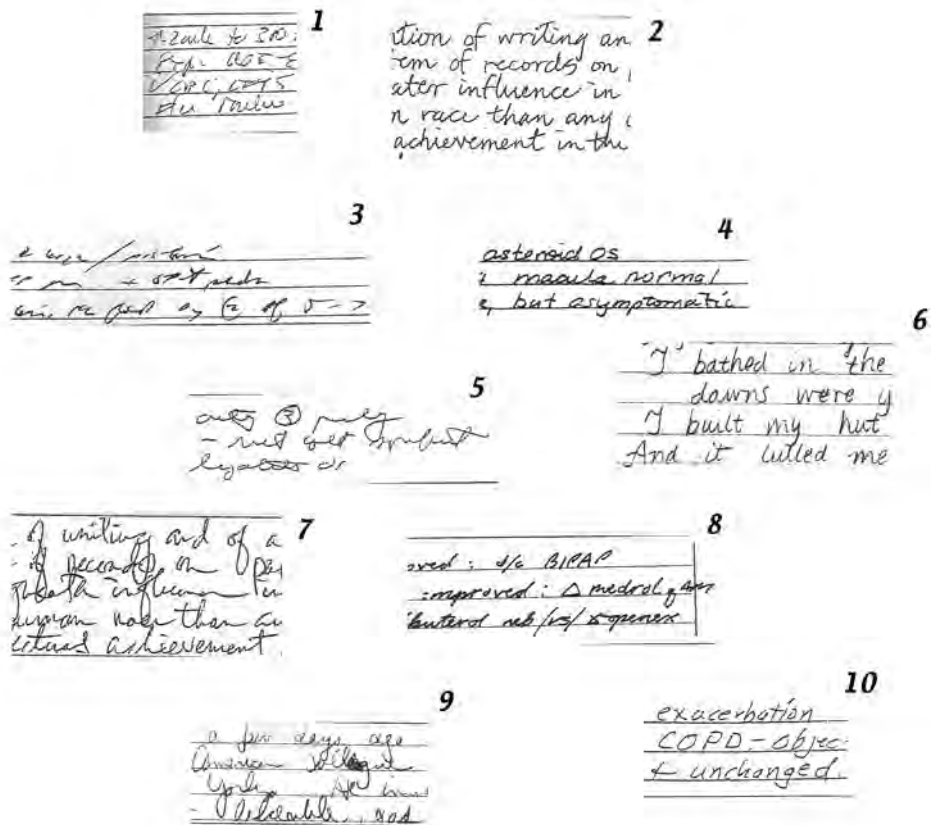


and wrote up a sample calculated to look like a person who wasn't very bright, and then when she [the graphologist] started to tell me about it (without coming out and saying "You're a dummy," of course!), I started making incisive statements and asking complicated questions. She was utterly baffled!"

Another PCA member, a pen-show exhibitor who, out of curiosity sometimes visits graphologists at pen shows or elsewhere, prefers not to play such tricks on people who after all have a living to earn. "I don't have time for practical jokes—I just write the way I normally do, which is what, after all, the graphologist asks for." "Unfortunately," the exhibitor notes, "on average I see the graphologists getting things wrong about as often as they get things right... not that they tend to admit it. When I point out the graphologist has made a wrong deduction, or somebody who knows me well points that out, the graphologist just says: 'That's not important. Most people don't really know themselves or their friends or family well enough to be accurate about them—which is why we have graphology.' Funny thing, though—the graphologists never say that when anybody tells them they got something right."

Do graphologists accurately discern personality through handwriting? *Pennant* readers who know any graphologists can test this claim. If handwriting reveals its author's personality to the graphological eye, a graphologist looking at two or more samples of handwriting should easily deduce whether or not the samples came from the same person. To probe how well graphologists and others do at this handwriting/personality task, your columnist has prepared a simple experiment for *Pennant* readers, graphologists, and anyone else who may like to try. On this page, you will see a set of "befores" and "afters" taken from a popular book on handwriting improvement, then shuffled like cards and numbered for identification. Unscramble the samples by matching each "before" (odd-numbered sample) with the correct "after" (even-numbered sample)—answers at the end of this installment.

Fig. 6. Sample Scramble. Handwriting samples courtesy of Portland State University's handwriting improvement program. This illustration shows 10 samples produced by 5 adults.



The odd-numbered samples and even-numbered samples come from the same writers, before and after some handwriting instruction—but we have scrambled the order of the samples.

For each "before" (odd-numbered sample), give the number of the "after" (even-numbered sample) that you think the same writer produced. Then check your answers against the correct answers at the end of this issue's installment. How well did you do? How about your friends and family? Take the "Sample Scramble" to your favorite graphologists, and see if they do better, worse, or about the same.

If graphologists can evaluate personality from handwriting, they should have no trouble sorting these samples correctly into pairs: with a "before" and an "after" from the same person in each pair. At the very least, if graphological claims hold true, graphologists should do better at this task than people without graphological training. So far, though graphologists accepting the "Sample Scramble" challenge typically score significantly fewer correct matches than non-graphologists. (Graphologists, so far, average 1 out of 5 correct

matches, while non-graphologists average 3 out of 5 correct matches. So far, no graphologist has scored better than 3 out of 5, and several have scored zero. No non-graphologist has yet scored worse than 2 out of 5 in "Sample Scramble," and several have made perfect scores.)

Of course, a graphologist may practice that one particular subspecialty of graphology which not only admits, but actually relies on, the possibility of substantial conscious handwriting change: the subspecialty called "graphotherapeutics" or more recently "graphotherapy." Graphotherapists take the basic premise of graphology (that personality features create handwriting features) and assume that it also works in reverse: that adding a particular feature to your writing (or subtracting it from your writing) must cause your personality to gain (or lose) the graphologically corresponding character trait. (For a graphotherapist's description of graphotherapy and its claims, see De Sainte Columbe, 1972.) Graphotherapists' logic, if accepted, would seem to have some striking consequences. If handwriting alterations really did alter person-

ality, then those schools that still teach handwriting would witness a sudden outbreak of major personality changes among third-graders each fall or spring when the teacher replaced printed handwriting with cursive. Similarly, graphotherapists and their followers would have to expect that *Pennant* readers applying the handwriting improvement tips published in earlier columns would find their own characters transmogrifying in sync with the changes in their script. (As far as we know, though, no such phenomenon has occurred either among our readers or among third-graders.)

Plainly, graphological statements do not necessarily fit the real world. Research has verified the gap between graphology and reality with regard to at least one graphological dictum, one of the few that (it seems) all graphologists of every school agree with and repeat: "Handwriting is brainwriting." In fairness to graphologists, that graphological premise has one unarguable kernel of truth, in that our brains control our hands along with controlling every other part of our bodies. As far as we know, nobody lacking a live and (at least somewhat) functioning brain has ever managed to learn how to write (or has even shown the least interest in the task). However, in graphology the statement that "handwriting is brainwriting" means much more than the rather obvious assertion that handwriting requires some working brain cells.

According to graphologists, the fact that bodily movements (such as those used in handwriting) and personality traits all originate in brain activity must mean that personality traits produce our handwriting. (In actuality, of course, those parts of the brain which control bodily movements are not the parts which control our personalities.)

As a "convincer" of sorts for their claim that "handwriting is brainwriting" (and that handwriting therefore must depend on personality), graphologists often assert that someone who learns to write with the other hand (or with the foot, the mouth, or a prosthesis) will inevitably come to produce the same handwriting that he or she used to produce when writing with his or her normal writing hand. As best-selling graphology author Andrea McNichol puts it in

her textbook *Handwriting Analysis: Putting It To Work For You* (McNichol, 1991) — "Studies of thousands of people who have lost the use of their hands and have had to learn to write with the pen in their mouths or between their toes show that they eventually produce their own 'handwriting;' the same handwriting that they had when they could use their hands." McNichol's bibliography does not list the "studies of thousands" that she refers to here; neither she nor her publisher responded to inquiries on this matter. Fortunately, though, a study does exist (Latrobe University, 1997) has established that people who re-learn writing with a different limb of the body usually end up with writing very unlike their previous writing. Even after they practice enough to become proficient, the new handwriting does not actually resemble the old, as some graphologists claim it must.

Of course, one study cannot condemn (or verify) a whole field. What does the research as a whole say about graphology as a whole? To find out, one could reasonably start by going directly to the graphology organizations—and at least one investigator has done exactly that.

In 1985, human resources researcher Michael Moore contacted eight of the world's largest graphology organizations (in the USA, Israel, and Europe) asking if they could provide him with any scientific studies showing that graphology accurately reveals personality characteristics. Four of the eight did not respond. Among the four that did respond, none provided scientific studies or research citations supporting graphology. One of the USA organizations forwarded Moore a non-research article about graphology, copied from *Playboy* magazine. Another organization, the Israeli Graphological Institute, referred Moore to a 1933 work, *Studies in Expressive Movement* by Allport and Vernon, which examines graphology and comes to a negative conclusion about its value.

Given the apparent lack of valid and reliable graphology research, the author decided to make her own inquiries into what evidence might support believing—or disbelieving—in the usefulness of graphology. The next installment will feature interviews with a former professional graphologist (now turned disbeliever)

and a practicing professional graphologist.

#### Correct pairings in SAMPLE SCRAMBLE:

- #1 —> #10
- #3 —> #8
- #5 —> #4
- #7 —> #2
- #9 —> #6

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Allport, Gordon and Vernon, P.E. *Studies in Expressive Movement*. New York: Macmillan, 1933; Amend, Karen and Ruiz, Mary S. *Handwriting Analysis: The Complete Basic Book*. Franklin Lakes, NJ: The Career Press, 1980. (Quoted in Tripician); Ben-Shakhar, Gershon; Bar-Hillel, M.; Bilu, Y.; Ben-Abba, E; and Flug, A. "Can Graphology Predict Occupational Success? Two Empirical Studies and Some Methodological Ruminations." *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 71, pp 645-53; Binet, Alfred. *Les Révélations de l'Écriture d'après un contrôle scientifique*. Paris: Felix Alcan, 1906; British Columbia Civil Liberties Association. Position paper on graphology in personnel screening. Retrieved from [bccla.org/positions/privacy/88graphology.html](http://bccla.org/positions/privacy/88graphology.html); Brown, Gerald R.—graphologist and behavioral profiler (personal communications and interview, October, 2007); De Sainte-Colombe, Paul. *Graphotherapeutics: The Pen and Pencil Therapy*. New York: Popular Library, 1972; EEOC Informal Discussion Letter on Handwriting Analysis. Retrieved from [eoc.gov.foia/letters/2001/titlevii\\_disparate\\_handwriting.html](http://eoc.gov.foia/letters/2001/titlevii_disparate_handwriting.html); Jansen, Abraham. *Toetsing van Graphologische Uitspraken: Een Experimentele Studie Amsterdam*: F. Van Rossen, 1963; Jansen, Abraham. *Validation of Graphological Judgments: An Experimental Study*. (revised and expanded English edition of 1963 source). The Hague: Mouton, 1973; Klimosky, Richard and Rafaeli, Anat (1983): "Inferring Personal Qualities Through Handwriting Analysis", *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, Vol. 56, pp. 191-202; Kurtz, Paul, editor. *Skeptical Odysseys*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 2001; Kurtz, Sheila — graphologist (personal communication, October 2007, and website at [graphologyconsultinggroup.com](http://graphologyconsultinggroup.com)); Latrobe University Honors Program in Rehabilitation and Orthopedic Research—papers for 1997. Retrieved from [latrobe.edu.au/ncpo/.docs/hons97.html](http://latrobe.edu.au/ncpo/.docs/hons97.html); McNichol, Andrea. *Handwriting*

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# "Hello, my name is Adam, and I am a user."

**I was trying to think of a good lead-in for this article, but the only "user" analogies my tired, cliché-ridden brain could come up with related to drugs of varying shades of legality. While my addiction to fountain pens often feels as strong as my addiction to caffeine (and much more frequently leads me to engage in questionable behavior), it just wasn't the tone I wanted to set.**

**—Adam Frank**

I AM A FOUNTAIN PEN USER—AS DISTINGUISHED FROM A FOUNTAIN PEN COLLECTOR. WHY MAKE the distinction? "Oh, you collect fountain pens!" is something I hear quite often (generally with a tone of rueful sympathy if my wife is in earshot). But I don't. Sure, I have more than one. O.K., I have more than 50. But I use each and every one of my pens; those that don't see use get sold—if someone wants to buy them. To non-fountain pen people, the fact that I have more than 50 pens makes me a collector. To real fountain pen collectors, however, I am at best an accumulator. But I'm happy in my role as a user, and can finally answer the question I (and my wife) have been asking myself for some time: "What the hell am I doing with all these fountain pens?!"

I began accumulating fountain pens using the "magpie" method—if it was pretty, I bought it. A short time after I was introduced to the wonders of vintage pens and the dangers (to an accumulator) of online auctions, I had about 20 modern pens and a dozen vintage. I used all of them. I never thought of not using the pens I was buying—after all, they are writing instruments. They were meant to write. I bought pens I liked, inked them, carried them everywhere and wrote with them.

Indeed, the fact that I wrote with these beautiful, intricately engineered (PFM, Vac) writing instruments made me ashamed of my dismally illegible handwriting. I was motivated to improve, and after two years of work with *Write Now* and other self-teaching books (as well as a couple of courses) my handwriting is quite pleasant and I've developed an interest in, and some facility with, calligraphy. (*Editor's note: This is something of an understatement to those who have received one of Adam's letters.*) So my status as a user has had some salutary effect.

In addition to improving my handwriting, my interest in calligraphy has allowed me to amass with a purpose: I have about two dozen pens all of which have italic, oblique or flexible nibs in varying sizes. But other than my interest in "unusual" nibs, my collecting has little focus.

Focus. From the beginning, several members of the fountain pen community urged me to find a focus for my "collection." Indeed, I think new collectors are often led to believe that they must have a focus for their collection. When a new collector joins a newsgroup or bulletin board and posts a query about how to go about collecting, the predominant advice tends to be, "Find a focus." For me, the focus is "How will it write?" And, I think a case can be made that, at least in the beginning, that's good enough.

In the beginning of my obsession with fountain pens, one member of the community suggested I concentrate on pens made by William S. Hicks. I got two, but much as I like them, they're identical except for some slight variations. And I'm just not programmed to care about owning every last variation of a particular pen. Another member of the community suggested (by example) striped pens. I got a couple—they're nice, but I can't see myself buying every color or every cap, cap band, imprint and nib variation. Waterman overlays? Too expensive. Mandarin Duofolds? Too fragile to use. Jade Sheaffers? I'd be afraid of discoloring the barrel. Remember, I want to write with my pens—not fear them.

It may be heresy to many who read this publication, but I don't care when a particular company introduced the triple cap band or when the clip was shortened or became humped or whether there is contemporaneous advertising material suggesting that a "transitional" model was, in fact, a Frankenpen. I don't care about the Twelve Clip Rivet Variations or the Tipping Material Controversy. I don't care when production moved from one factory to another.

Let me clarify that: I care when I find a pen that I think might be valuable and one of those characteristics would let me know definitively. I kick myself for not having cared when I could have learned the information that would make me an instant millionaire (and, nearly as importantly, a Sumgai). I vow to care, to learn all I can about pens in general when I return to my computer. Once the opportunity to own a rare variant passes, however, I quickly regain my ennui regarding these characteristics.




This is not necessarily something to change or correct. Some of us are users and always will be. Others are collectors. Everyone defines “collector” differently, and although I’m sure there are more correct definitions, mine is simply, “Someone who buys pens for a purpose other than writing with.” (Forgive the terminal preposition.) It doesn’t matter whether a collector is focused on obtaining every variant of a particular line of pens or is trying to gather rare examples from one or more obscure manufacturers. It also doesn’t matter if the collector also has pens with which he or she writes. The instinct to collect, categorize and display, but not use, defines “collector” for me.

My status as a non-collector was confirmed when a colleague described his stamp-collecting hobby to me. He has several beautiful, framed sheets of stamps hanging in his office (which defines him as a collector in my book—stamps are for mailing, *n’est-ce pas?*). I asked him if there were any stamp shops near our office; he replied, “eBay.” Uh oh.

You can picture the rest. I got on the ‘bay and within days was the proud owner of about \$100 worth of “vintage” stamps (from the 1930s on up to the 1990s)—beautiful, mint sheets of some very nice-looking stamps. And I’m sure you’ve guessed my next move: at the first opportunity, I used those stamps to post letters to friends—written, of course, with my fountain pens. I experienced some regret; like a mint fountain pen once inked, these sheets will never be perfect again. On the other hand, I have obtained more utility from using those stamps than I ever would have from framing them.

“So what?” you might ask. I think there is often a tension between the hobbyists who, upon hearing about someone with a mint, unused example of a vintage pen shout, “Ink it!” and those who shout, equally fervently, “Don’t you dare!”

As a user, I don’t care whether a pen is mint or not. Indeed, because a mint pen once inked can never be “mint” again I am reluctant to ink a mint pen if I can find a similar non-mint example. Collectors ascribe a value to mint condition and will pay a premium over the price of an identical non-mint pen. Why should any user use a pen that in a real sense cannot be replaced? Sell it and buy a dozen user-grade pens that perform the way you want them to, whether it’s putting down a fine dry line or a paintbrush-width pool of ink.

Let the “real” collectors have their mint pens; we users will be happy with pens that write. 

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Editor’s note: What’s your take? Are you a user or a collector? Maybe you’re a hybrid? Write a letter to the editor—with your fountain pen, no less—and we’ll print your opinions in a future issue.

...finding

## “The One”

by Rick Progar

All of us have pens we seek, no, make that pens that we burn for, even while recognizing we may never attain them.

As a collector of vintage Pelikans, for me that holy grail of pens was the lapis Pelikan 101. Made in very small numbers from 1935 until 1938, this is a pen that collectors sit around and discuss. “So and so has one,” or “have you ever seen one?” At the time this pen came into my consciousness, about five years ago, few of my German pen friends had one and there were none known to me in the United States.

Given that, it seemed highly unlikely that I would ever have one. Resigned to that fact, I sought a couple

of substitutes. In 2001, I had Tom Westerich make me a replica, and when it came out I bought the readily available “Originals of Their Time” modern replica. So I had two lapis Pelikans, but neither was the “real thing.”


Then it happened, one came up for sale, of all places on the dreaded eBay, somewhere I really do not like to hang out. In fact, I might never have known about it, had my webmaster Gillian Hart not pointed it out to me. But there it was. Breaking open the piggy bank and counting my pennies, I decided what I could bid. I put in my bid and it held for a few days. But I knew that the real truth would come at the end.

Alas and alack, the afternoon it closed we had opera tickets. I figured fate had spoken: this pen was not to be mine. I just knew that, at the auction’s end, all the usual suspects, from Germany, the United States, Japan, would furiously bid against each other and I would not be there for the contest.

So, I looked deep into my soul, upped my bid to the max, figuring that we’d find some way to pay the next month’s mortgage. Off to the opera we went. I enjoyed the opera, but drove home a bit more quickly than usual to see which dirty rascal had taken “my pen.”

Tremblingly, I clicked the update button to see the auction’s end. No! Impossible! There it was. Mine was the highest bid, the winning one. And, on top of it all, the amount was nowhere near my maximum. No one had shown up. My mortgage payment was saved. Miraculous!

Later in 2006, I spoke at Columbus with one of the leading Pelikan collectors in America, asking him what happened, why he had not bid. He looked at me quizzically. What was I talking about? He had never seen it. No one saw it.

And it’s mine. So the moral (there’s got to be a moral, right?) must be to keep looking, have faith, and, even if the pen fairy does not bestow her ultimate blessing on you, have fun. 

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## Ink-Maker Fountain Pens

By Bruce Speary

**Fountain pens that used dry ink and water originated in the days of the eyedropper-fill pens. Technically, any eyedropper fill pen could be used with dried ink. At the time, it was very easy to drop in a pellet of dried ink and simply add water. However, this article deals with those fountain pens made specifically for use with dry ink.**

IN FAIRNESS, IT MUST BE SAID THAT THE IDEA OF AN INK-MAKING PEN WAS NOT A NEW ONE. THERE HAD BEEN AN INK-MAKER DIP PEN MARKETED AS FAR BACK AS 1877. THE DIP PEN HELD A SUPPLY OF DRY INK UNDER THE NIB AND, ACCORDING TO ITS ADVERTISING, ALL THE WRITER HAD TO DO WAS DIP THE PEN IN WATER AND START WRITING. IT WAS MARKETED AS A PEN FOR TRAVELERS SO THEY WOULD NOT HAVE TO CARRY INK ALONG WITH THEM. ADS CLAIMED THAT ALL ONE HAD TO DO WHEN THEY WERE DONE WRITING WAS LET THE INK SUPPLY DRY AND THEY WERE READY TO TRAVEL AGAIN.

AS EARLY AS 1901, JOHN BLAIR OF NEW YORK CITY WAS SELLING AN INK-MAKER FOUNTAIN PEN THAT CAME WITH WHAT HE CALLED "INK CARTRIDGES" THAT WERE BASICALLY INK PELLETS. BUT IT WAS THAT SAME OLD "READY TO TRAVEL" CONCEPT THAT LED TO THE INK-MAKER PEN'S HEIGHT OF POPULARITY. DURING WWI, THE THOUGHT OF CARRYING INK BOTTLES INTO WAR WASN'T APPEALING TO THE TROOPS. HOWEVER, TAKING ALONG INK PELLETS OR POWDERED INK WOULD BE MUCH EASIER AND MUCH SAFER. PARKER, SWAN AND MOORE ALL SOLD INK-MAKING PENS DURING WWI. PARKER

Fig. 1. A selection of ink-makers from the 30s and 40s.







Fig. 2. Moore Inktab pen accompanied with an original ad from a 1920 catalog.

Fig. 3. Cut-out in the cap of the Moore Inktab.



called their ink-maker the "Trench" pen. The Moore Inktab pen (Fig. 2) had an ink pellet storage chamber built in to the cap. This storage chamber had a glass tubular liner that allowed you to see the pellets inside through a cut-out in the cap (Fig. 3).

The user filled the storage chamber with ink pellets by first unscrewing the top of the cap.

To get a pellet out, the upper half of the cap was unscrewed from the lower half and there was a hole just big enough to let one pellet out. Swan sold its WWI ink-maker pen as the "Military" model (Fig. 4). This pen had 2 chambers in the barrel. The ink chamber was much shorter than normal so that the bottom end of the pen could store the extra pellets. This pen had an ink pellet tube that screwed into the bottom of the barrel (Fig. 5). To get an ink pellet out you unscrewed the knob at the end of the barrel. After a few turns, you would expose a hole in the tube and, assuming the pellets hadn't gotten damp, a pellet would fall out.

As stated earlier, all eyedropper-filled pens could be used as ink-makers. However, the self filling pens could only use normal ink and lever fillers had to be altered to work with dry ink.

In the 1930s, a new line of ink-makers was marketed. Fig. 1 shows some of these ink-makers. Two of the lever filled models from the 1930s are shown in Fig. 7. The mottled pen is marked "Water Pen" on the clip. On this pen, you unscrew the red end cap on the barrel and inside are small rod-like ink pellets. The section on this pen unscrews like an eyedropper fill pen and you insert an ink pellet into a hole on the back of the feed. The pen is then filled with water using the lever. Although the black pen is also a lever filler, the ink is in small metal tubes that are inserted into the front end of the feed. You did not need to remove the section in this style of pen. The ink refills are stored in the bottom of the barrel. This pen is unmarked. The small piece of paper found inside the barrel held the only clue to the maker. The paper has instructions on how to order more ink refills from "Inkpak Manufacturing" of New York.

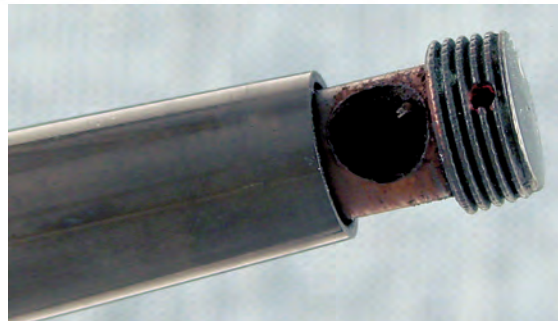


Fig. 5. Ink pellet tube in the Swan Military model ink-maker.



Fig. 4. Swan "Military" model along with an original magazine ad from 1918.



Fig. 6. Imprints on various ink-maker fountain pens.




In 1935 the Camel Fountain Pen Co. started selling a high quality ink-maker pen (Fig. 8). This pen was button filled and contained a small canister of ink, which had a screen on one end for the water to enter it. The Camel pens worked better as conventional pens rather than ink-makers. The removal of the ink canister and filling the pen with regular ink made the pen write well. Using the dry ink gave mixed results. Camel lasted only a few years in the marketplace.

Sager was a fountain pen manufacturer in the 20s and 30s, but started selling a line of ink-maker pens in the 1940s (Fig. 6). These pens had an "ink battery" inside (a rod of dry ink) and a spare "battery" under the blind cap. They actually had no filling system. You would open a valve at the



Fig. 7. Lever filled ink-makers from the 1930s.

back end of the pen and submerge most of the pen in water. The pen would slowly fill up to the water line and you would close the valve. The pen was supposedly ready to write at this point. The Aqua pen (Fig. 9) worked much like the Camel pen. You would squeeze the filler tube and the water would then mix with the dry ink at the back end of the tube.

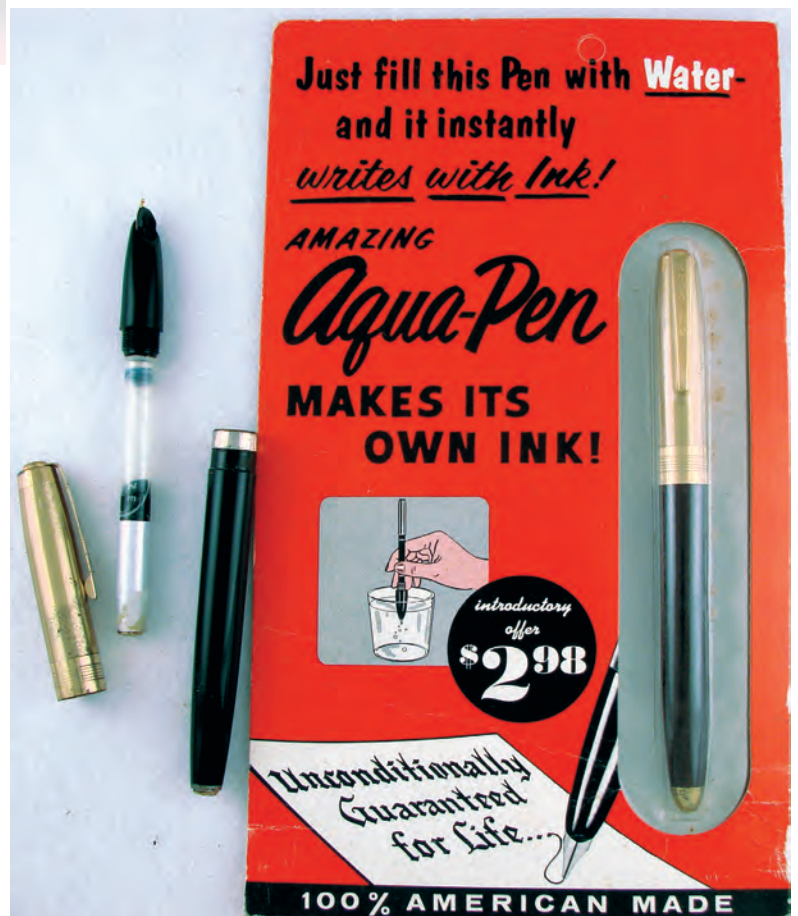
Ink-maker fountain pens were still being made up into the 1950s. However, they would never again be as popular as in the days of the eyedropper. The problem with the Camel and the other ink-makers of the 30s and later was that the ink was never properly mixed. The ink would be inconsistent since the dry ink was constantly immersed rather than being completely used up in one filling like the eyedropper-filled pellet pens. When found today, many of these ink-makers are caked with old ink that has become almost tar like in consistency over the years. Ink pellets and dry ink worked well when mixed with water correctly. The lever fill and button filled ink-makers never achieved the results that eyedroppers had. 

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Fig. 8 Camel pen with a catalog page from 1938.

Fig. 9. Aqua pen.



# OPENING A TIME CAPSULE: SHEAFFER'S VOYAGER V-MAIL KIT



1943 calendar with ruler.

BY JOHN DANZA

**It was 1942, and the United States was firmly in the war, making moving a lot of men and materiel to the war fronts in Europe and the Pacific a key priority. The U.S. had been primarily neutral throughout the 1930s, resulting in a military ill-prepared for the conflict. Now the War Department was gearing up fast. With all the shipping going on, there wasn't much room for mail to and from the soldiers. A solution needed to be found. That's where V-Mail came in.**

**I**NVENTED BY KODAK IN THE LATE 1930S, THE V-MAIL PROCESS WAS CUTTING EDGE at the time. Letters written on a single sheet of paper were mailed to a central location, where censors reviewed them. They were then photographed onto reels of film. Thousands of letters could be put on a reel about 8 inches in diameter. The reel was then shipped to a location near the troops and printed on a small sheet of paper and sent to the destination. This process freed up significant amounts of space for shipping of materiel. Great Britain had adopted the process several years before, calling it Air Graphs. In 1942, The U.S. government adopted it, dubbing it V-Mail (for Victory Mail).

The entire country was behind the war effort, and that included pen companies. In support of the V-Mail effort, and applying some smart marketing, the major manufacturers of ink changed their messaging for their black ink, tying it to use for V-Mail. Parker Quink Permanent Black became "V-Mail Black", while Sheaffer's Skrip Black became "V-Black." In 1943, Sheaffer took it a step farther and developed a kit relatives of soldiers could purchase and mail directly to their loved ones. This kit was to contain everything necessary for the soldier to write letters home. Very appropriately, the kit was called "Voyager." The price was fixed at \$1.

Several years ago, while researching V-Mail for an upcoming book I'm writing on the subject, I acquired an unopened Voyager kit. Now I was faced with an agonizing conflict. While I wanted to investigate and document the contents, the historian in me didn't want to open something that had remained pristine for more than 60 years. My conflict was resolved recently when I acquired a second unopened kit. Time to open one up!

I cut along the dotted line running around the center of the tube, and pulled the top off. Staring back at me was a small calendar dated 1943. The calendar has a ruler printed along one side. Why a little ruler? Perhaps to assist in judging distances when reading maps in the field? It's fun to speculate.






On the back of the ruler is a full set of instructions on pen care. This was very important during the war years, as pen manufacturing had essentially ceased, with the production capabilities of the pen companies converted to war production. The instructions helped service members keep their pens in good working order.

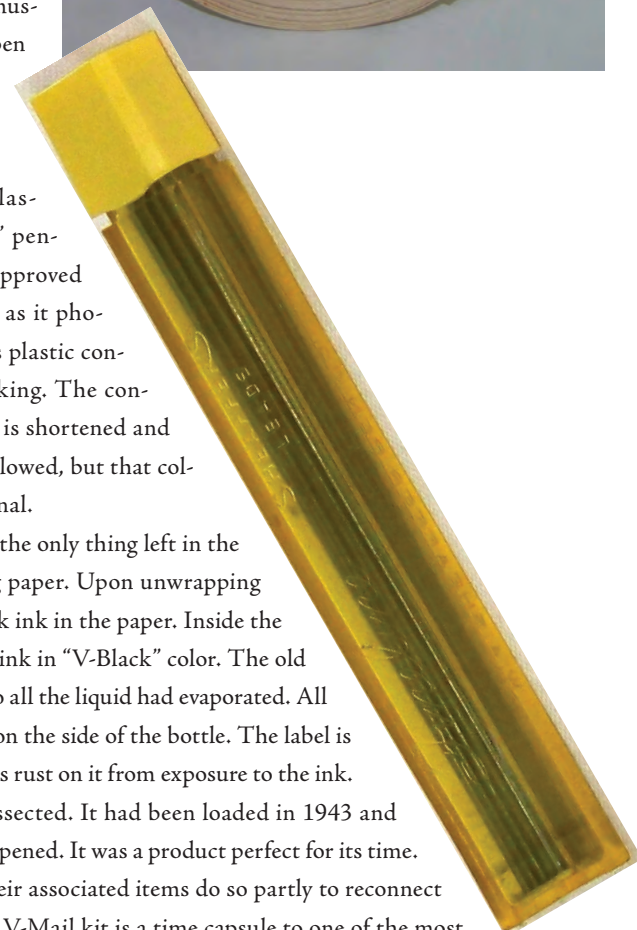
The calendar is wrapped around a roll of 50 V-Mail forms. These forms are one-page letter sheets that fold into their own envelopes. These forms were mandatory for V-Mail. If soldiers used V-Mail, they paid no postage. Civilians stateside who used these forms for sending V-Mail still had to pay the three cents postage.

Tucked within the roll was a folded cloth. The cloth is a piece of white muslin and was intended to be used as a pen wiping cloth. This was an all-inclusive kit, and you need to wipe your nib off after filling your pen, right?

Folded inside the cloth is a plastic container of Sheaffer "Fineline" pencil leads. Black pencil lead was an approved method for writing V-Mail letters, as it photographed as well as black ink. This plastic container had clearly done some shrinking. The container is slightly curved and the top is shortened and slightly loose. The plastic is a bit yellowed, but that coloration is even, so it is probably original.

After removing the roll of forms, the only thing left in the tube was wrapped in brown packing paper. Upon unwrapping it, there were several blotches of black ink in the paper. Inside the paper is a 2 ounce bottle of Sheaffer ink in "V-Black" color. The old leak had allowed air into the bottle, so all the liquid had evaporated. All that was left was dried ink caked up on the side of the bottle. The label is in perfect shape, but the bottle cap has rust on it from exposure to the ink.

The kit had been opened and dissected. It had been loaded in 1943 and then patiently waited 64 years to be opened. It was a product perfect for its time. We collectors of vintage pens and their associated items do so partly to reconnect to the history of them. The Voyager V-Mail kit is a time capsule to one of the most amazing times in our country's history. 

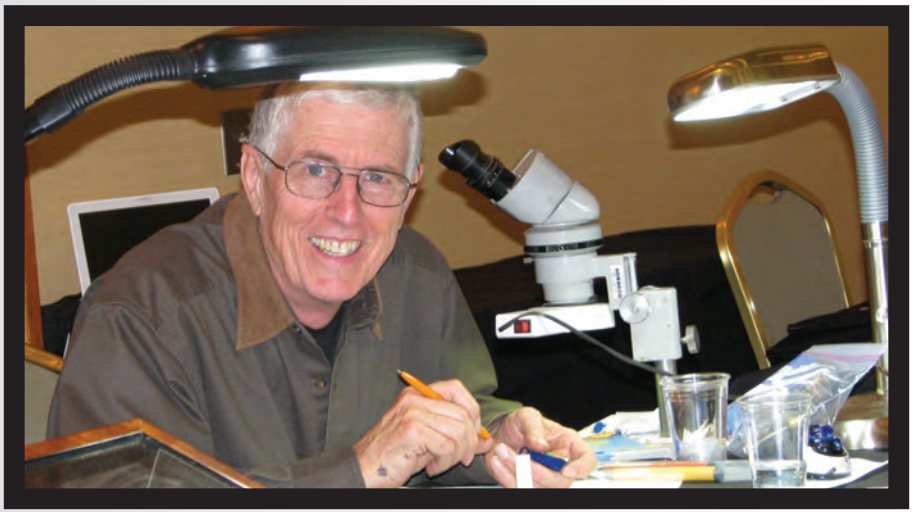


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**Clockwise from top left: Voyager V-Mail kit; Rolled V-Mail forms; Sheaffer Fineline pencil leads; Wrapped V-Mail ink bottle.**



# To Live



# & Write

by Richard Jarvis

OUTSIDE IT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING FROM CENTRAL CASTING OR THE GREATER LOS ANGELES CHAMBER of Commerce. Beautiful palm trees swaying in the breeze, perfect azure skies and lots of shiny cars. Yes, Sepulveda Boulevard remains like something straight out of a Tom Petty lyric sheet. But who ever gets outside at a pen show? Really now.

The 2008 repetition of the Valentine's Day pen show featured the usual rush of crowds on Sunday that snaked in a serpentine line through the hotel lobby waiting for the doors to open to the public. They mixed, as fate would have it, with a regional group of Pez dispenser collectors who were sharing the Manhattan Beach Marriott that weekend. But the real action, as always, was inside the ballroom and had been going on for three days solid by the time the doors of the show opened Sunday morning.

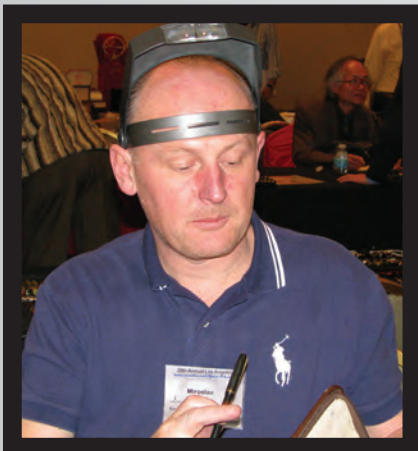
Inside the ballroom, vintage pen dealers and collectors spent all day Thursday, Friday and Saturday shuffling from table to table comparing notes, trading stories and just plain trading, negotiating and striking deals. Notable this year was lots of showing off of pens made outside the U.S.—a growing trend at all U.S. pen shows. There were also lots of dealers whose tables featured lesser known manufacturers such as Diamond Point (featured on p. 4), Good Service, Golden Rule, Kreko and legion of others.

I continue to be amazed at the number of pens over 50 years old that are available looking literally new in the box—complete with stickers, cellophane wrapping and other trappings that show the pens were never used. If you want to see such items, pen shows are your best bet and the quality of some on display at LA was outstanding. I saw one boxed Parker 51 set with pens still in their cellophane tubes and the box in near-factory condition. Lots of other pens still featured the original stickers and a few examples of salesperson cases filled with pens (fountain, ballpoint and even pencil) were floating around the room over the course of the weekend.

There were at least three people on the floor doing pen repairs or adjustments—John Mottishaw, Penopoly in the person of Victor Chen, and Aaron Svabik of Pentiques. All were busy throughout the weekend and swamped on Sunday when the public came in. It looked as if all three tables were kept busy bringing show finds back to life or making a favored pen “just right.”

Several tables featured piles of parts pens, loose parts and specific parts such as clips, caps and nibs. Those tables were especially busy during the first days of the shows when dealers and serious collectors rifled the bins and piles for just the right part. PCA board member Joel Hamilton commented that pen shows are critical for dealers who are constantly in need of parts to repair pens. As the more-favored pens get older, the issue of parts is one that grows, according to several of the dealers on the floor. As always, several PCA board members were in attendance at the LA show

# in LA







and they met to discuss the organization's year ahead. Those plans are sure to be covered in the new electronic newsletter that should be gracing your mailbox by now. If not, go to the website and sign up to keep up to date between issues of *The Pennant*.

°The LA Pen Show is one of the largest on the circuit, and featured over 175 exhibitor tables. Collectors and exhibitors from over 20 countries were in attendance. This year's show was a great success, and next year's show, to be held on Feb. 15, 2009 should be even better. 🖋️





# SO, WHO'S HANDLING YOUR PRIZED POSSESSIONS?



**Any inkling whose hands these are?  
Check out the owners on page 37**

photos by Dede Rehkopf











## Give your letters some breathing room...

Most people,  
if you asked them  
to tell you how  
to make  
your writing  
look better,  
would start  
talking about  
letterforms,  
nib widths,  
pen angles  
and baselines.

*Not Ward Dunham.*

BUT THEN, THAT SHOULDN'T SURPRISE ANYONE WHO'S SPENT ANY TIME AT A pen show visiting with the big, burly man. Dunham, an excellent calligrapher, doesn't have a particularly conventional outlook on life in general. He often sits at the table he and his wife, Linnea Lundquist, share under the Atelier Gargoyle name, whiling away time by carving reed pens of various sizes and telling tales to passersby and friends.

He also gives seminars on various kinds of calligraphy and, in this particular instance, on how to create instant impact when writing a letter. His method for achieving that goal, which often seems elusive to fountain pen writers?

Take advantage of the element of every blank piece of paper that artists and designers call white space.

Many pen collectors write from edge to edge to be sure to use the entire paper surface. Don't do that, says Dunham. Leave margins. Leave space. This acts as a visual frame for your words, making them stand out and causing your recipient to be immediately more interested in reading your letter.

Don't believe it? Try this: Take a few text-heavy pages of a magazine such as *Time* or *Newsweek*, which don't have very big margins (or the edge-to-edge sheets from a couple of letters you've recently received). Lay them out side by side. Take a blank piece of copy paper and cluster five or six small Xs on it. Place that sheet somewhere in the row of pages. Now, stand back and look at them. Which one stands out? Which one draws your eye, demands that you look at it?

**BY ANNA LAWSON**

That's right. It's the nearly empty one.

Use that power when you're writing letters, says Dunham. If you have a big reed pen with a one-inch nib or larger (as does Dunham), use that to write your recipient's name across the top of the page, as Dunham did in illustrating








this point for his seminar attendees. If the person has a longer name, turn the page sideways and write it large along the longer edge of the page.

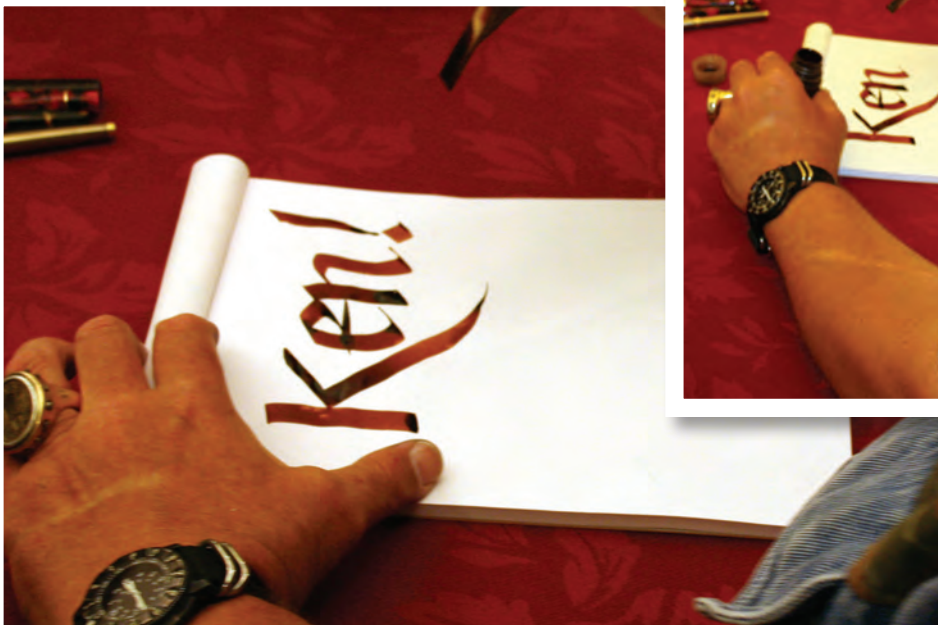
Then use the edges of the person's name as "markers" for your margins. Or, if the person has a descender or two (part of a letter that extends below the baseline, as in g, y or q), use that as a margin edge and write in a narrower column down the length of the page.

Go wild. Use a hard pencil to line in margins in unusual shapes—a triangle, a pentagon, an ellipse, a circle—and confine your writing within those boundaries. We all admire letters written in a spiral, from the center out, so that we have to turn the page round and round to read the contents. Practice this a few times on some scrap paper; it's not that difficult and can be stunning when taken out of the envelope—even if it's not done in a beautiful italic script.

If you're an edge-to-edge writer, you might want to start out simple. Just add margins to your letters, an inch or so all the way around. Then increase the margin width on one side, and on the next letter, on the other side. Before you know it, you'll be thinking up creative layouts for your letters that will guarantee impact. That will make Ward Dunham—and your recipients—very happy. 

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# THE PORTLAND PEN SHOW



## BY CARLA MORTENSEN

IN 2004, THE MEMBERS OF THE PORTLAND PEN Club decided that our corner of the world was woefully remiss in any and all events pen. It is hard to believe that we are coming up on the fifth “running” of the Portland show. While still no competition to our “Big Brother Super Shows” in LA, DC, or Chicago, our efforts to bring together serious pen aficionados and to serve up first-class Northwest hospitality has been a cheering success. We look forward to many more years of showcasing our hometown, “Paris on the Willamette.”

The first question any show organizer faces is—where to hold such an event? I was fortunate to discover that our local Embassy Suites Hotel was, in fact, the historical Multnomah Hotel, a 1912 vintage multi-story dowager gracing downtown Portland—built in the era of gilt-trimmed colonnades and large potted palms in the lobby. After a multi-million-dollar renovation, the Embassy Suites recently re-opened with all the amenities a show organizer could hope for—exhibition rooms with lots of light, a catering staff second to none, and a hotel property that was continuously winning customer service awards. It was love at first sight.

The second question was—what on earth could we do to attract people to Portland? The puzzle to choosing our timing was solved with the Palmer-Wirf Antique Expo, one of the largest antique shows in the country that was drawing a number of the Bay Area and Pacific

Northwest pen folk to the area already during its summer weekend. We figured that if we ran the show at the same time as the Expo, folks would be able to get a “two-fer,” that is, to attend the Expo on the first day and to still make the whole pen show. In addition, July tends to be “picture perfect” weather wise in Portland, a huge plus. Long lovely evenings, warm sun and no humidity, a variety of weekend festivals, municipal parks in full bloom, and country-fresh fruits and vegetables are among the attractions that we all look forward to savoring from July through September.

Finally, we faced the age-old question—how to get the local folks clued in to the existence of the show? Our biggest problem lies precisely in the last sentence in the paragraph above—summer in Portland finds the locals fanning out across the landscape in search of a myriad of local activities as well as weekends on the beach or in the mountains or even, gasp, leaving for other venues around the country or the world. Gratefully, our experience has been that while the amount of our walk-in traffic has not yet reached our ideal, our public attendees remain interested, eager to learn and... (ta DA!) ready to buy, and to buy without haggling (we’re too Scandinavian

for that). Many of our vendors report that Portland is among their best shows in terms of sales. (Editor’s note: I overheard more than one conversation involving dealers at the LA Pen Show that expressed that the Portland show was among the best in terms of sales for the dealers. RJ)

This year, we plan to welcome back: Sam and Frank Fiorella of Pendemonium, Mary Burke with Conway Stewart, Bert Oser with Bertram’s Inkwell, Jimmy Dolive with Total Office Products, Karen Kennedy with Paradise Pen, Jerry from Laban, nibmeister Greg Minuskin, Rick Propas the PENguin, Gary and Myrna Lehrer of GoPens, Saul Kitchener, Joel Hamilton and Sherrell Tyree, Bruno Corsini, John Strother, Alan Brooking, Fyberworks, Sam Moore, and many more. For more information, please see our website at [portlandpenshow.com](http://portlandpenshow.com) or contact the show organizer (me) at [carla\\_mortensen@hotmail.com](mailto:carla_mortensen@hotmail.com). A happy attendee wrote recently, “The simple fact is that anyone within three thousand miles who is fond of good living and good pens should join us.” Hope to see you in July! 📧





# Ohio Pen Show





# 13TH ANNUAL OHIO PEN SHOW

Review and photographs by Tom Rehkopf

The 13th annual Ohio Pen Show was held November 1-4, 2007 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Dublin, a suburb of Columbus. The show featured over 150 dealer tables, and organizers Terry and Sonya Mawhorter (who also put on the Research Triangle Pen Show in June) did their usual excellent job in putting on a great show.

Show patrons included hometown manufacturer Bexley Pen, *Pen World International*, Luxury Brands, Nibs.com, Pendemonium, and *Stylus* magazine. Each patron had a broad range of their products on display.

Thursday trading was followed that evening by a parts auction, which was a great opportunity for collectors and repairers to add to (or subtract from!) their parts bins. Friday trading was restricted to weekend pass holders, and the day ended with the Pendemonium-sponsored pizza party, always a great hit. Pizza and pens are apparently a popular combination, as an amazing number of pizzas were consumed. Either that or pen collectors and dealers just like free food. The PCA held a general membership meeting on Friday evening at 8PM following the pizza party, where new board members were introduced.

The Ohio show has one of the better (and few remaining) pen auctions, which was held Saturday night and featured over 150 lots, including an early Conklin slip cap gold filigree Crescent Filler, a Holland eyedropper, a double jewel sterling cap Nassau green "51", a Conklin 75 Crescent Filler, and a very cool Wahl Eversharp milk glass advertising globe. Most items met reserve and bidding was brisk. For those who like buying pens in 30 seconds in a fast-paced, action-packed atmosphere surrounded by others bidding on the same item (and apparently many people do, as the room was packed to capacity), this was your opportunity.

There were numerous seminars held throughout the weekend, featuring workshops by Roger Cromwell, John Mottishaw, Rick Propas, Aaron Svabik, Susan Wirth, and Deb Basel. An added attraction this year was Deb Green of Middle Earth Turnings, who gave demonstrations of wood turning on a lathe.

The Ohio show is one of the best shows on the circuit for vintage pens, and collectors seeking to add to their collections found ample opportunities to do so. A number of dealers exhibit only at the Ohio show, and the wide variety of offerings coupled with the seminars and auctions have helped the Ohio show become one of the biggest and best. Centrally located within a day's drive of many population centers, Ohio remains a favorite of collectors and exhibitors alike. 🖋️



## From the Editor >>> 2

the computerized parking-payment machines weren't working. A discussion with two technicians who were putzing around and helpfully mumbling that it wasn't working resulted in the magical appearance of a manager, and after only a 45-minute stay in that line, we were on our way.

As I fell into a chair in the hotel restaurant (I'd last eaten about 3:30AM and it was close to sack-out time), I reflected on one of the ironies not only of the trip but of our times: I'd had to depend on all kinds of ultramodern, fantastic technology that day. Nearly all of it had failed me. The highway department, Internet maps, security-line organization, jet-plane maintenance and repair, electronics on the plane, my cell phone, and even the parking-lot computer. I'd had only my carry-on bag, or most likely the baggage-handling system would have failed me, too, and my stuff would have been someplace just outside Bogotá.

What does this have to do with the ink on these pages?

The single, solitary, sole, lone, and exclusive piece of technology I encountered that day that actually worked was... my 75-year-old fountain pen. And people wonder why we treasure these jewels.

Anna Lawson

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*Editor's Note: With this issue you'll notice the addition of Richard Jarvis to our masthead as managing editor. Richard not only knows pens and has sold pens and accessories, but he has an extensive background in journalism. He comes on board to give our team more depth and adopt some hands-on functions. He's a level-headed fellow (well, for a pen collector, anyway) and as gentlemanly as they come in the South. We're delighted to have him on board and look forward to a productive partnership that will continue to improve The Pennant.*

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## Handwriting >>> 13

*Analysis: Putting it to Work for You.* Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1991; Melisi, Donna—Marketing, Pilot Pens (personal communications, November 2007); Nevo, Baruch, editor. *Scientific Aspects of Graphology: A Handbook.* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1986; Nezos, Renna. *Graphology: The Interpretation of Handwriting.* London: Rider, 1985. (Quoted in Tripician); Pen Collectors of America member requesting anonymity (personal communication, October 2007); Pen show exhibitor requesting anonymity (personal communication, November 2007); Picon, Marie—editor of *Pen World* (personal communication, November 2007); Silverman, Robert—Vice President of Marketing, Pilot Pens (personal communication, November 2007); Spohn, Julie A. "The Legal Implications of Graphology" in *Washington University Law Quarterly*, Fall 1997. Retrieved from [law.wustl.edu/WULQ/75-3/753-6.html](http://law.wustl.edu/WULQ/75-3/753-6.html); Tripician, Robert J. — former graphologist (personal communications and interview, October 2007); Tripician, Robert J.. (2000) "Confessions of a (Former) Graphologist" in *Skeptical Inquirer*, issue 24, pp. 44 – 47.

# Remembering Al Mayman



VETERAN MEMBER OF THE PEN COMMUNITY AL MAYMAN PASSED away shortly after returning home from attending the Long Island Pen Show. With Al's passing we have lost someone who touched people around the world. Whether you knew Al from his very active buying and selling at pen shows or through his sale of pens on the Internet, you know that he was a positive force within our hobby and will be long remembered.

Al was a pen user and collector first, having arrived on the antique and flea market scene more than 15 years ago. His early collecting interests centered around senior size flat top pens, but he also had an eye for early fancy eyedroppers. After a successful career in retail, he converted his interest in collecting and using pens into a business of buying, restoring and marketing pens on eBay under the store name Penultimate.

Without a doubt, Al stood out as a professional among his peers. He had an ability to understand and satisfy the needs of his pen friends. Whether it was a pen to be used as a writer, or added to a collection because of rarity or beauty, he understood what pen people wanted. His ever expanding knowledge of the hobby combined with his honesty and extreme hard work, converged to make him quite successful. In recent years, Al expanded his involvement with pens to include modern pens and in particular, Bexley pens.

If you ever had a chance to deal with Al or talk with him over a smoke, or if you shared a meal at the end of a long day at a pen show, you would have discovered that he was someone that you would want to call a friend. We will miss him.

— Terry Mawhorter



FROM THE **PRESIDENT**

## EXCITING THINGS ARE HAPPENING

I am most pleased to be able to greet you all as the president of the PCA. It was an honor to have been elected to the board in 2006 and a further honor to be asked to lead the board. As president, I am committed to helping the PCA Board of Directors take the PCA to the next level.

What that means to us is to build upon the work of prior boards to make this organization function in a more modern and rational manner and to be even more member-oriented than we have been in the past.

Over the past year I served with Dan Reppert during his tenure as president and much of what we will be doing in the coming years began with Dan's vision. Most notably, Dan was able to bring on board a professional facilitator for non-profits, Sonya Mawhorter, who most of you know as the spouse and partner of Terry Mawhorter—the hosts of the Columbus and Raleigh Shows.

Last August Sonya led a one day workshop with the board, during which we set some ambitious goals. Among them is the desire to strengthen the organization by increasing membership. To do that, we have to make the organization more responsive to you. We have begun a new e-newsletter called *PCAccent* to be delivered to all of you via e-mail. We have reshaped the website, mostly to improve appearance and to allow more sure communication.

*The Pennant* will continue to deliver the highest quality articles on both vintage and some modern pens. Our strong editorial team of Anna Lawson supported by Dede and Tom Rehkopf has been further augmented by Richard Jarvis. Welcome, Richard! We all look forward to seeing your great enthusiasm and imagination enhance the pages of our favorite pen magazine.

The PCA Library, under the steady hand of Dan Reppert, will continue to deliver to you the materials to feed your need for information. And, in the coming months, we plan to initiate a digitization project to bring the contents of the library to a newly designed website.

Speaking of the website, under the direction of Linda Bauer our website has been freshened and we are creating an interactive Web 2.0 site that will have members-only features and greater access to research materials here and possibly abroad.

A new treasurer, Russ Ewert, is working with a financial committee to ensure that we handle all our finances in a professional manner.

I would also like to welcome a new board member, Ernesto Soler, who will complete the term of a member who resigned. We look forward to using Ernesto's talent to help us move forward.

Last, but so very far from least, we have created a member services committee, headed by Kim Sosin, that will ensure not just growth, but those of you who have joined have reliable access to the services you need.

If you want to see what we are up to, visit the newly created PCA booth at any of the major pen shows, meet our member outreach coordinator, Kim Svabik, and spread the word. You can be part of this effort by urging friends in the pen community to join. With larger numbers our strength will grow.

As I said at the start of this column, exciting things are happening in the PCA. Become a part of them. Join, keep in touch, be active. The PCA is for all of us.

Rick Propas  
President

## Join a Club

Looking to network with fellow pen collectors?

Check out a local pen club. Not listed here? Email your club information including contact name, email and phone number to: [info@pencollectors.com](mailto:info@pencollectors.com)

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### From the Stacks

## THE DIGITAL LIBRARY

by Dan Reppert, PCA Librarian

As many of you probably know, the PCA has had on its agenda for some time the digitizing of the contents of the library so that it can be placed on the website. Sounds like pretty serious techno stuff for people collecting hundred year old writing instruments. Feedback from members tells us this is something you really want.

Rather than scanning third generation copies, I decided to go back to the sources for the originals to scan. Many of the originals had been donated by Fred Krinke. He generously agreed to loan us the originals for scanning purposes. I picked them up from him at the LA pen show. The first batch is some early Sheaffer catalogs and dealer sheets. These scans, downloadable from the website, in color if original, will be a significant improvement over photocopies, not only in terms of quality but also availability. Our sincere thanks to Fred for his help.

We are also working with others to provide already scanned material in digital format. This could involve as much as 20 percent of what is now available. This would help both in terms of quality and time saved in scanning.

We continue to receive items from our friend Bill Cowell in DC. The last batch included a booklet on presidential pens plus a few modern pen catalogs. Thanks also to Bill.

If anybody out there has an old catalog which they would be willing to scan and download to a disc please get in touch with the librarian. There are some specific guidelines we need to adhere to. Even if what you have is currently listed in the library, if you would be willing to scan your original it will make our resources that much better. Contact your librarian at [wasp1908@mchsi.com](mailto:wasp1908@mchsi.com).



## Seattle Pen Club

by George Long

The pen collectors from Washington and British Columbia try to have a joint meeting about twice a year. Bellingham is roughly in the middle and is an obvious choice for location. For this meeting we tried a new venue discovered by Rob Astyk—the Bellingham Public Market. It's housed in what appears to be a former supermarket, which now contains a handful of small businesses anchored by a natural foods grocery. For our purposes the essentials were there: a food court, espresso bar, and deli. By pushing several small tables together we created a perfect setting for displaying pens.



The attendance at these meetings is usually an even distribution of people from the three areas represented—Seattle, Bellingham and British Columbia. Those of us from Seattle had a leisurely drive up Interstate 5. The Bellingham locals had only a short jaunt. However, the folks from BC showed great dedication by enduring three-hour waits at the border crossing and arrived a little late, but still in high spirits.

Most of us knew each other from previous meetings, Internet bulletin boards, or the Portland Pen Show. It was as much a reunion of friends as a gathering of pen collectors. Although pen club meetings often have repair demos, ink days, or even presentations on envelope making, the Bellingham meetings are often just an opportunity for simple sharing of recent acquisitions and old collections—show and tell.

Some of those who show up have extensive collections and can pick a different part to show at each meeting.



If you think such meetings might be staid and uneventful, let me convince you that there is occasional excitement. I have witnessed the handling of rare and valuable pens in a way that set my hair on end. At this meeting a particularly valuable Japanese vintage pen, worth gazillions of galactic pen credits, was held precariously by two fingers and casually turned and twisted by its owner three feet above a hard concrete floor. A fumble or slip would have thoroughly destroyed the pen. The sight sent chills up my spine and made my palms sweat.

The meeting theme this time was “your oldest pens,” and some did bring them, but there were lots of other pens too, modern and vintage, and the conversation ebbed and flowed on many different pen subjects. Somehow none of us remembered to bring a bottle of ink, so dry pens stayed as dry as my jokes. Someone from Canada mentioned a concern that ink might be regarded as a suspicious liquid by the border agents and cause further delay in crossing. In spite of being unable to dip pens and try new inks, everyone seemed to enjoy the meeting. Even at roughly three hours long it seemed much too short.

For more information on the Seattle Pen Club, contact George Long at [george.long1@comcast.net](mailto:george.long1@comcast.net).

Editor's note: Tell us about your local clubs meetings and activities. Drop an e-mail to [pennant.ed@gmail.com](mailto:pennant.ed@gmail.com)



Top to bottom: Saul Segura (left) talking pens with Vernon Shutt; George Long (left) inspects a pen; Arvin Chaikin shows a pen to John Mills (left) while another meeting attendee and Ann Chaikin (right) look on.

## Upcoming Shows

*Location and dates may be subject to change; please contact the show organizers to verify information below. The PCA keeps an up-to-date listing of current and pending U.S. pen shows on the PCA website: [pencollectors.com](http://pencollectors.com), courtesy of Susan Wirth.*

**Atlanta Pen Show**

Apr. 4–6, 2008  
Crowne Plaza, Perimeter NW  
Boris Rice, 281.496.7152

**Boston Pen Show**

April 12–13, 2008  
Holiday Inn Somerville  
Rob Morrison, 828.298.0331

**Chicago Pen Show**

May 1–4, 2008  
Westin O'Hare  
Don Lavin, 847.272.2745

**Research Triangle Pen Show**

June 5–8, 2008  
Embassy Suites, Cary, NC  
Terry Mawhorter, 614.619.5025

**Portland Pen Show**

July 11–13 2008  
Embassy Suites Downtown  
Carla Mortensen, 503.282.0020

**Miami Pen Show**

July 18–20, 2008  
The Biltmore, Coral Gables  
Bert Oser, 202.409.6000

**DC Supershow**

August 7–10, 2008  
Sheraton Premiere Tyson's Corner  
Bob Johnson, 864.963.3834

**Michigan Pen Show**

Sept. 5–7, 2008  
Hilton/Detroit Troy  
C. Eric Fonville  
734.355.9408

**NYC/NJ Pen Show**

Sept. 19–21, 2008  
Doubletree Newark  
Mary Ann & Steve Zucker  
718.434.3713

**Dallas Pen Show**

Oct. 3–4, 2008  
Sheraton Dallas North  
Pete Kirby, 972.529.6364

**Ohio Pen Show**

Nov. 6–9, 2008  
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dublin  
Terry Mawhorter, 614.619.5025

*Show organizers are encouraged to submit show details for this column to the editor.*

## PCA Pen Show Supporters

*The PCA expresses its gratitude to the sponsors of the following pen shows for graciously donating table space. Thanks for your generosity!*

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**OHIO** • Sonya and Terry Mawhorter

## Pennant Back Issues

Back issues of *The Pennant* are available. Most are photocopies. All are \$10 each + \$5 postage and handling in the U.S. per order, overseas postage will vary. All requests for reprints should be addressed to:

**Dan Reppert, PCA Librarian, PCA Library, P.O. Box 447, Fort Madison, IA 52627-0447; e-mail: [wasp1908@mchsi.com](mailto:wasp1908@mchsi.com)**

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1996—Spring, Winter/Fall

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2007—Spring, Summer, Fall

2008—Spring



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The PCA membership year runs from January–December. Membership renewal notices are sent each November to those due to renew. If you join the PCA between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, your membership is automatically extended through the following year.

As a current member, don't forget to send any updated personal information to [info@pencollectors.com](mailto:info@pencollectors.com). If you've moved, changed your name, changed your email, added a FAX line, or made any other changes, it will not be correct in the listings unless you tell us! We are pleased to offer membership levels with added benefits. As a non-profit, all-volunteer organization, the PCA is only as good as the support it receives. Your contributions keep *The Pennant* arriving on your doorstep three times a year, help support the PCA projects and enable the PCA to continue to grow and improve. When you renew your membership this year, we hope you'll consider one of our special new membership levels, which are detailed at the left. Even if your membership is not up for renewal, it's easy to upgrade to one of the special membership levels—simply drop us a line or email us at: [info@pencollectors.com](mailto:info@pencollectors.com). Thanks for your support!

#### ANSWERS TO PRIZED POSSESSIONS QUIZ ON PAGE 23–25.

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Sam Fiorella    | 8. Osman Sumer     |
| 2. Susan Wirth     | 9. Lynn Sorgatz    |
| 3. Sherrell Tyree  | 10. Richard Binder |
| 4. John Mottishaw  | 11. Bruce Mindrup  |
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Contact Dan Reppert for details: [info@pencollectors.com](mailto:info@pencollectors.com).*

**VICTOR CHEN** recently retired from his position as Professor of History at Chabot College. Chen continues his Tech Notes column, a regular feature in *The Pennant*.

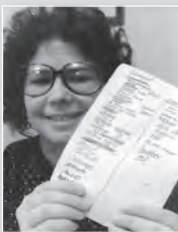


**JOHN DANZA** has been collecting fountain pens for 10 years, with a concentration on Parker pens made before 1920. He's also a historian by hobby, with concentrations on the Revolutionary War period and the Old West. In real life, John is the head of product management for a large insurance software vendor.

**ADAM FRANK** started collecting when he went on the Internet in 1998 to replace his law school graduation gift and discovered the online fountain pen community. He took up calligraphy so his writing would do justice to the pens he was writing with; he has a long way to go. He lives in New York City with his wife and children.



**KATE GLADSTONE** teaches and remediates handwriting internationally, working and traveling from her home in Albany, NY. To better help left-handers, she taught herself to write left-handed.



**RICHARD JARVIS** has spent more than 20 years in journalism, including time as a newspaper reporter and editor. He has suffered from a life-long pen affliction that seems to have no cure in sight. His collecting interests include vintage pens with stub and other specialty nibs as well as German piston-fillers. He lives in Roswell, Ga., and is a native of North Carolina.



**ANNA LAWSON** has used and collected fountain pens since childhood, which is a long way away at this point. A writer as well as an irascible hermit, she keeps a pile of rocks beside her door to throw at intruders.

**DAVID MOAK** remembers Sheaffer cartridge pens from his school days. His re-acquaintance with fountain pens came when his wife Mary Jane taught him a simple calligraphic hand. His collection gradually centered on Mabie, Todd (& Bard). He researched and produced *Mabie in America*, the definitive work on the U.S. company.



**CARLA MORTENSEN** When not drooling over pens and trying to run the Portland Pen Show, Carla Mortensen can be found teaching ESL at Portland State University, her fourth and (so far) favorite career. "Pen collecting started for me when I inherited my grandfather's pen in 1999, a stunning Edward Todd 14K gold overlay. My daily users at the moment are a Namiki VP, an Omas Ogiva Guilloche with a John Mottishaw cursive italic nib, and a customized Parker Insignia."



**RICK PROPAS** is president of the PCA and the sole proprietor of PENguin, a website for fountain pen collectors that focuses on Parkers, Pelikans and other German and American pens. To support his hobby he is a United States history professor at San Jose State University.



**TOM REHKOPF** is a computer system architect in Atlanta, Ga. He has written several articles for *The Pennant*, and has been collecting pens for over 15 years. "My collection remains largely unfocused," he says proudly, "except of course for brown Parker '51's, which you can never have enough of."



**DAN REPERT** collects off-brand Sheaffers such as Univer, W.A.S.P., and Craig. He is librarian of the PCA. He worked for Sheaffer for over 12 years, and is currently involved in historic building renovation in Fort Madison.



**BRUCE SPEARY** has been collecting pens and watches for 15 years. Ten years ago he became a full time antique dealer when he found himself suddenly unemployed. He now has more time to do pen research and collect his favorite pen, the Paul E Wirt.





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*The Pennant* invites you to submit articles of interest to the PCA membership. Contributions should be submitted as email attachments, on floppy disk or on CD, using standard word processing software.

**Articles:** We welcome articles dealing with pen collecting, writing instruments, pen manufacturers, ephemera, news about your recent finds, and Letters to the Editor. *The Pennant* "Author's Guidelines" document is available upon request, and members of the editorial staff and PCA Board are available to assist you. Submit your article in Microsoft Word. Please do not use auto-numbering or imbed your images in your text file.

**Illustrations/Photos:** When submitting images, be certain that they are scanned at no less than 300 pixels per inch. Photos look best on a non-reflective white background (lucite is good and foam board works well). Images may be submitted as email attachments or on CD as JPG images. We cannot use images imbedded in text documents or spreadsheets.

**Deadlines:** Available on request. Contributions are subject to editorial review and should be sent to: PCA, Attn: Editor, *The Pennant*, PO Box 447, Fort Madison, IA 52627-0447 or via email to: [info@pencollectors.com](mailto:info@pencollectors.com).

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*All opinions expressed in The Pennant are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the PCA, its directors, or members.*

### The PCA Board

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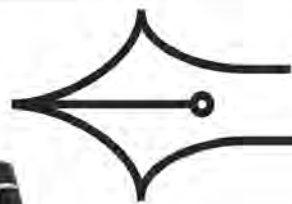
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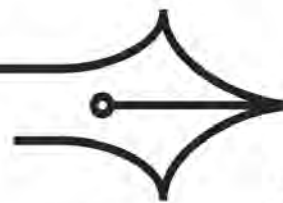
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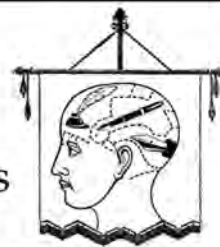
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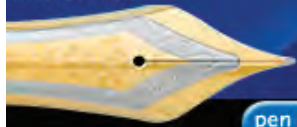
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